THE EARLY LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

By the same Author

Les Sources françaises de Goldsmith

(Paris, Champion, 18 francs)

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"By far the most searching and complete examination of the mind and methods of Goldsmith that has as yet been published. . . . Never since Dr. Ferriar revealed to an illiterate world how the immortal author of *Tristram Shandy* had filled his larder out of the then neglected pages of Burton's *Anatomy*, has the pleasant task of tracking a quick-witted author to his 'sources' been performed so effectively and so good-humouredly as in this charming monograph."—

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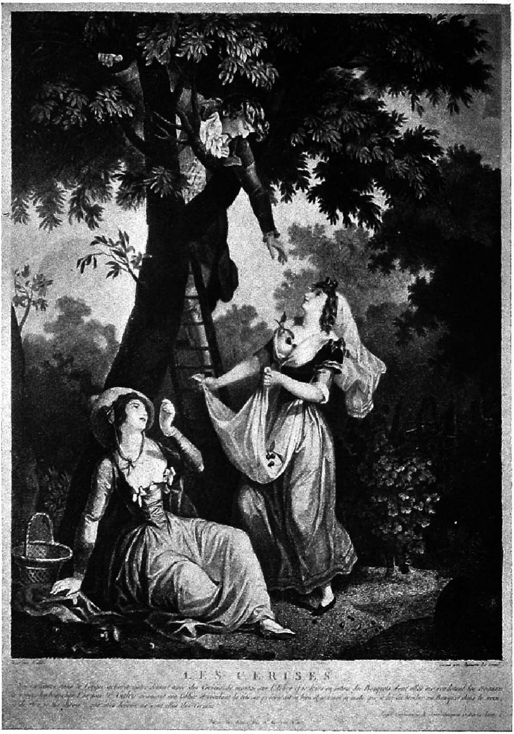

"They then went out into the orchard to finish their dessert with cherries. Jean Jacques climbed into a tree and threw down the bunches of fruit, while the girls held out their pinafores to catch them and sent the cherry-stones back at him through the branches" (Ch. X).

From an engraving in the Musée J. J. Rousseau at Geneva.

THE EARLY LIFE AND ADVENTURES
of
JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

1712—1740

FROM THE LATEST SOURCES

BY

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"Qui vit sans folie n'est pas si sage qu'il croit"
—La Rochefoucauld

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To I. E. R.

Foreword

AFTER more than a century and a half, Rousseau still remains a favourite subject of controversy, and hardly a year passes without adding to the arguments for or against Jean Jacques. Obviously the man who is chiefly responsible for awakening passion, enthusiasm, "la sensibilité," in 18th century France, must always appeal to the imagination. Recently, new interest has been roused by the editing, by Messrs. Dufour and Plan, of a correspondence which sheds unexpected light on many of Rousseau's motives and actions. The logical outcome of this publication is Dr. Sells' work, which gives us in a consecutive and literary form all the new facts.

Without omitting any essential details it takes a sane view of Rousseau's chequered career. As d'Alembert says:—"J. J. Rousseau est un malade de beaucoup d'esprit et qui n'a d'esprit que quand il a la fièvre. Il ne faut ni le guérir ni l'outrager." Rousseau has always been a favourite subject of study for medical authorities and psycho-analysts, and thus the uglier episodes in his life have been given undue prominence. It is possible, as Dr. Sells shows us, to touch upon this side of Rousseau's life with a light hand, and to leave speculations on his morbid state to the remoter regions of the author's notes. Historical accuracy is losing nothing by this method, and we are given a very normal and sound view of the growth of a strange character.

Many readers, accustomed to the vagaries of the "vies romancées," may look askance at the work of a biographer who quotes his authorities and does not distort facts or indulge in surmises. The "vie romancée" is, we may hope, merely a transitory fashion, while Lives of the type of *The Early Life and Adventures of J. J. Rousseau* have a permanent value, historical and scientific, as well as literary.

O. H. PRIOR.

Introduction

THE name of Jean Jacques Rousseau is familiar to all the world, and yet, in this country, he has inspired very few critics or biographers. Professor C. E. Vaughan has produced the standard edition of his *Political Writings*.[1] Mrs. Macdonald's *J. J. Rousseau: a new criticism*[2] was an able *plaidoyer* in the philosopher's favour. It exposed the unreliable character of Madame d'Épinay's *Memoirs* and dealt with the "campaign of calumny" conducted against Rousseau by Grimm and others. But it mainly concerns the middle and later periods of his life; and the author refuses to see in him a case of partial insanity. That he *was* partially insane, after the year 1766, may now be regarded as certain: it is the opinion of most medical investigators[3] and is freely admitted by many Rousseauists.[4] A book entitled *Rousseau and the Women he loved*, by Mr. Francis Gribble, was published in 1908—before the appearance of the very important works of MM. L. F. Benedetto, P. M. Masson, L. Proal and L. J. Courtois.[5] Lord Morley's *Rousseau and his Era* (1873, 2 vols.) was a great work in its day; but very little was then known of Jean Jacques beyond what was revealed in his own writings, in the monograph by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, and in certain letters and memoirs of the eighteenth century. And we are now faced by the paradox that a book written over fifty years ago, and now out of date, still appears to be the standard work in English and is quoted as such.

Since that time, an immense amount of research has been done in France and Switzerland on various periods of Rousseau's life and various aspects of his mind and art.

[1] Cambridge, 1915, 2 vols.

[2] London, 1906, 2 vols.

[3] e.g. Doctors P. J. Möbius, A. Châtelain, P. Sérieux and J. Capgras. See also L. Proal, *La Psychologie de J. J. Rousseau*, 1921, *passim*.

[4] G. Vallette, *J. J. Rousseau genevois*, Paris, 1911, pp. 382–401.

[5] See the Bibliography to the present volume.

A mere review of the literature on the subject would provide material for a whole volume; here it can only be remarked that we have no up-to-date life of Rousseau in English. Many people, whose knowledge of the philosopher is limited, form an unfavourable view of him, not justified by the facts. As his philosophy was in large measure the fruit of experience, as well as of character, a patient study of his life would appear the first requisite at this moment.

* * *

Among the many sources for the life of Rousseau, his autobiographical writings[1] and his correspondence occupy a place apart. The former are sometimes corrected by the latter, sometimes by independent research. But in any man's life, poetical truth matters far more than external truth; and no one can reconstruct the poetical truth of Rousseau's life without using the *Confessions*. They are, of course, treated here as a document, subject to error like other documents.

They are not always *chronologically* accurate. Some of the most interesting episodes took place thirty years, or more, before Rousseau recorded them, and his memory was no more infallible than that of other men. He says, in referring to the first six books: "Ma première partie a été toute écrite de mémoire, j'y ai dû faire beaucoup d'erreurs." Jean Jacques was converted to Catholicism after eleven days in the Hospice of the Spirito Santo, and not, as the *Confessions* represent it, after more than a month; but he probably stayed there for a considerable time. The chronology of the famous Idyll of *Les Charmettes*, as well as its emotional background, is very confused. The principal period of Rousseau's life at *Les Charmettes* began *after* his return from Montpellier in 1738, and lasted with intervals until 1740: it was a time of study and reflexion and quiet, rural pursuits. Rousseau in the *Confessions* brings it back to 1736 and 1737 and casts over his picture a haze of romance which in some measure belonged to this earlier period, but which has been

[1] *Confessions, Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, Dialogues: Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques*, and passages in his other writings.

heightened by the play of memory and imagination. It is possible, however, that as early as 1736 he had passed a few months in the valley of *Les Charmettes* and that he is not mistaken in ascribing to that year the walk on the Festival of Saint-Louis. In any event, the error of the *Confessions* lies more in the chronology than in the essential truth about Rousseau's inner life, which it is the biographer's business to discover. The researches of MM. Mugnier, Masson and Courtois have here re-established the probable sequence of events.

Where Rousseau is rarely, if ever, at fault in the *Confessions* is in sincerity. His imagination, as we have seen, sometimes coloured and transformed the past: sometimes, too, his *verve* and instinct for literary development led him to dramatise a scene and make it rather more perfect than it had been in reality. One cannot help feeling that this may have happened when he described the adventure in the Temple at Bossey, and the celebrated concert at Treytorrens's: they are among the great passages of literature. But then, they may be strictly accurate; and he would be an incredulous, dry-as-dust historian who forbade the biographer to utilise them.

Rousseau thought fit to include in his autobiography a few revelations which I have not repeated. His intention, of course, was to do what no one had yet done: to tell, and publish, the whole truth about a man, not only the bad and the good, but the mediocre and the ridiculous. The abandonment of his children could not have been kept a secret, but it is assuredly to Rousseau's credit that he told the story of Marion. There are, however, two or three episodes which it was quite unnecessary to record: they may interest the pathologist, but they tell us nothing of value about the essential Rousseau. His error here, as Sainte-Beuve said, was not in thinking he was doing something original, but in believing he was doing something useful.[1]

Rousseau's letters very happily supplement, as an original

[1] *Causeries du Lundi*, III, 81–2.

source, his *Confessions* and *Rêveries*. The *Correspondance générale*, now in course of publication in Paris,[1] offers many letters and documents hitherto unpublished, and suggests that this is the moment to undertake a new life of Jean Jacques. The present writer's object has been to produce a book that would be acceptable to the general public and also be founded on a critical basis. He has tried to make it accurate. His aim has been to reconstruct the texture of Rousseau's inner life from year to year, and to trace the growth of his personality.

* * *

Jean Jacques Rousseau was neither a monster (despite repeated and astonishing delinquencies) nor a saint (although in later life he came near becoming one); but one of the most *human* men who have ever lived. Two things separated him from his fellows. One was his genius; the other, a neurasthenic temperament and a tendency to mental deviation which was apparently inborn. We do not know exactly how it arose, but we conclude that it was in some way hereditary, because he had a cousin, very like him in appearance, who was subject to the wildest hallucinations.[2] In the course of years, and under the stress of great personal misfortune, and of persecution, this tendency in Rousseau developed into a form of paranoia (delusional insanity), known as the *Délire d'interprétation*.[3] It was the first crisis of this malady that occurred during his visit to England.

It is important to note that Rousseau's *Délire d'interprétation* was a partial, but not an intermittent, malady.[4] It was not what is commonly known as madness because it in no way diminished his genius or affected his moral nature: on the contrary, the last twelve years of his life, when he was definitely a victim of this psychosis, were a period of moral and religious progress and of marvellous artistic

[1] Edited by Théophile Dufour and P. P. Plan. Librairie Armand Colin, 1924—.

[2] See Appendix, Note II.

[3] Sérieux and Capgras have studied this malady in *Les folies raisonnantes: Le délire d'interprétation*, Paris, 1909.

[4] See L. Proal, *La Psychologie de J. J. Rousseau*, p. 379.

production. The form taken by his folly was to exaggerate characteristics which he already possessed: that is, a susceptible pride and a tendency to interpret actual facts in a false or exaggerated manner[1]: hence the name "Folie d'interprétation." Its principal symptom was persecution-mania. We cannot exactly say that he was subject to hallucinations. He had endured the reality of persecution, which partly accounts for the fact that he came to see persecutors everywhere. This constitutes a case of deviation of the judgment, rather than what we ordinarily mean by hallucination. Like that other idealist, Don Quixote, Rousseau was capable of giving the wisest counsel, and on most points his reason was perfectly intact. It must be remembered, too, that he was a creature of sensibility and imagination, and that from the age of twenty-five he became and remained a victim of acute sleeplessness. One may conceive what the mind would normally be capable of, under such conditions.

Among men of genius, Rousseau stands by no means alone in this matter. Pascal and Flaubert were subject to hallucination; Tasso, to a persecution-mania closely akin to Jean Jacques'. The end of Jean Jacques' life was relieved by a period of serenity, of faith in Providence, of absorbed meditation on higher things. This faith was, of course, the outcome of a long religious development; but the temperamental tranquillity that accompanied it is regarded as a symptom of the *Délire d'interprétation* in its last stage.[2]

What is the secret of Rousseau's wide appeal? Why does he inspire such affection even among men who do not accept the whole of his doctrine and who regret part of his influence? In the present writer's view, the secret of his attraction lies in his extraordinary humanity. He possessed, in an intense degree, the greatness as well as the misery of human nature. A Pascal might have seen in him the living contradiction which he had described—an epitome of mankind, a creature in the world but not of it, at once better and worse than those around him. Jean Jacques was

[1] See L. Proal, *La Psychologie de J. J. Rousseau*, p. 323. [2] Ibid., 400.

born with great frailties, and the circumstances of his early life did not check them; but he also received a noble genius and an unexpected capacity for moral regeneration, which raised him in later life above all but the greatest of his age.

Maurice Barrès once said of him: "C'est un autre moi-même!"; thousands of others have whispered the same thought to themselves. After all, every man will see a different Rousseau: he himself foresaw it. The most the biographer can do in his interpretation is to describe what Jean Jacques is for him.

* * *

The present volume deals with Rousseau's life to the age of twenty-seven. Brought up by an easy-going and pleasure-loving father, but in an atmosphere of Puritanism, he runs away from Geneva when he is sixteen and before his character is formed. Then follows a period of inconsequent wandering, during which he tries several careers without success. He settles down, a little more reflectively, in Chambéry and in the valley of Les Charmettes. Here, towards the age of twenty-five, he undertakes his own education, scientific, literary, philosophical and moral: the religious instinct in his nature finds expression in sincere aspirations to goodness. Since the flight from Geneva, it is true, he has made nearly all the mistakes which a boy would make if his character were unformed without being corrupt. And yet, even in these years, there is something better in him than his life and conduct.

It must be recognised that Jean Jacques was unlucky in the women under whose influence he came during this period. Neither Madame de Warens nor Madame de Larnage was the type of woman to give a young man the highest idea of love; and, in fact, Rousseau's feelings in this matter remain abnormal for some years. We cannot be altogether astonished when he associates himself permanently with Thérèse Levasseur.

Jean Jacques wrote no masterpiece during his youth, nor indeed before the age of thirty-seven; and yet these early years are full of interest. The foundations of his religion

are laid before he leaves Geneva, and the outlines of his philosophy—a philosophy simple, profound and altogether his own—are beginning dimly to take shape during the two years spent at Les Charmettes. The author has tried to indicate, also, the growth of a moral sense, at the time when Jean Jacques finds himself displaced by Winzenried, and when his intelligence begins to awaken and his religious sense to aspire to something better than the poor, mediocre existence he has been leading.

CAMBRIDGE,
July, 1928.

I have pleasure in expressing my gratitude to Professor O. H. Prior for the constant encouragement he has given me, and in particular for his contribution to the present work; to Miss Iris E. Robertson, M.A., for reading the proofs and assisting me in matters of style; to my father, who was my companion on more than one Rousseau pilgrimage; to Monsieur L. J. Courtois, Secretary of the Société J. J. Rousseau, who showed me the Society's archives in Geneva and helped me with his advice; to Professor Bernard Bouvier, of the University of Geneva, through whose kindness I am able to reproduce the engraving which appears as the frontispiece; and to Monsieur Henri Cochat, who assisted us on our pilgrimage to the manor of La Tour and explained the topography of Rousseau's expedition up the valley of the Fier.

July, 1929.

Note.—Technical details are discussed briefly in the Appendix. A Bibliography is included, and the references have been simplified as far as possible. Thus "*Annales*, XV, 31" means *Annales de la Société J. J. Rousseau*, Vol. XV (1923), page 31.

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The frontispiece is reproduced by kind permission of the Société Jean Jacques Rousseau. Monsieur le Commandant Favre, of Annecy, permits the use of the portrait of the Young Rousseau. The other illustrations are from photographs by the author.

Chapter I.

THE HOLY CITY

WHEN, in the year 1758, Jean Jacques Rousseau addressed to Monsieur d'Alembert, of the French Academy, his brilliant diatribe against the Theatre, he wrote after his name: *citizen of Geneva.* The significance of the title was understood. People did not sign themselves: citizen of London, of Paris, of Berlin. Or if they did, it simply meant: an Englishman, a Frenchman or a Prussian. But *citizen of Geneva* was more than a title of nationality. It had in it something original and unique. And Jean Jacques had reason to be proud of it.

He had been born in 1712 in the city which Ruskin has called "the centre of religious and social thought and of physical beauty to all living Europe."[1]

More than most peoples, the Genevese owed their national character to the recent course of their history. They owned obedience to no master. A little before the coming of the Reformers, the city had thrown off the yoke of its Bishop and of the Duke, had ceased to be an annex of Savoy, and had come definitely within the sphere of influence of the Swiss Confederation. Treaties or alliances were concluded with Fribourg, Berne and Zurich. Geneva became and remained Helvetic.[2] But the liberty thus won was only maintained at the price of constant watchfulness. On the night of 11–12th December, 1602, in time of peace with Savoy, the Duke attempted to surprise the city. Soon after midnight, two hundred Savoyards scaled the walls of the Corraterie, the rest of the army waiting outside. The attack on the inner gates of the city was to take place at 4 a.m.; but the alarm was given about 2.30 by a sentinel. Soon the town bell was clanging and the citizens pouring into the

[1] *Præterita*, ed. 1899, II, 121.

[2] See Gonzague de Reynold, *La Suisse une et diverse* (1923), 6, 7, 191. The chapter on *J. J. Rousseau et la Suisse* appeared in the *Annales de la Société J. J. Rousseau*, VIII (1912).

streets. For a moment the enemy gained a footing within the Porte de la Monnaie, while another party tried to blow up the Porte de la Treille but was frustrated by the fall of the portcullis. The citizens now took the offensive. The ladders that remained against the ramparts were swept away by a well-directed shot from a culverin, and the Savoyards were completely routed, some leaping from the wall and others escaping by the Porte Neuve.[1]

The anniversary of the Escalade was celebrated thereafter as a day of national deliverance.[2]

Throughout the seventeenth century the city remained armed and vigilant. Its importance as the capital of Protestantism was recognised by the princes of northern Europe who contributed to its defences. With our own country it maintained the friendly relations begun during the Reformation, and the influence of England was used on behalf of Genevese independence.[3] Facing towards royalist France and royalist Savoy, Geneva with its citizen militia and permanent garrison presented the picture of a free city-state similar to those of antiquity.

Like Athens and Lacedaemon, the city had had its great lawgiver. It was to Calvin that the Genevese owed their dour and Spartan qualities. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a hundred and fifty years of moral and religious discipline, combined with self-government, had transformed the "perverse and unhappy nation" which the Reformer had found into a people of remarkable character and originality.

The citizen of Geneva was a Protestant and a Calvinist.

[1] See J. Picot, *Histoire de Genève* (1811) II, 304–13. A detailed description of the Escalade, together with a plan, is given by Sir Frederick Treves in *The Lake of Geneva* (1922), Ch. V. The heroine of the occasion was Mère Royaume, who caused the first casualty among the Savoyards by flinging a heavy saucepan from her window.

[2] Abroad as well as in Geneva. In 1759, J. J. Rousseau invites his compatriots J. P. Lenieps, the banker, F. Coindet and D. Roguin, to celebrate the Escalade at Montmorency. (Letter to Lenieps, 2 Dec. 1759. *Correspondance générale*, éd. Dufour et Plan, 1925. IV, 345, No. 706.)

[3] Several Genevese who emigrated to England obtained high appointments in the Church and Army. For the relations between the two countries, see J. Texte, *J. J. Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire* (1895), 106–7.

If he ceased to be a Calvinist, he ceased to enjoy the rights of citizenship. He was still an ardent churchgoer. Every Sunday at 6 a.m. in summer, at 7 in winter, there was a service for servants and apprentices, followed by three other services during the day. Two sermons were given on Sundays and one on Thursdays. Every day, there were "exercises of piety" morning and evening.[1] These services were so popular that the old churches were no longer big enough for the congregations, and in 1715 the great Temple-Neuf was built in the lower town.[2] During the Sunday services, chains were drawn round the Temples and the city gates closed.[3]

There was no tenderness, at least among the lower and middle classes, for the "papist idolatry." The arrival of French immigrants, seeking refuge from the persecution of Louis XIV, stimulated the national hatred of popery; and the successful revolution which placed William III on the throne of England was greeted with jubilation in Geneva.[4] Intransigent in its ideal, the Protestant Rome was at once a citadel and an outpost jutting into Catholic Europe.

The citizen of Geneva was a Puritan. "Sword in hand," the Christian magistrate held himself ready to punish offences against the moral law as well as the penal code. For although at the beginning of the eighteenth century Genevese theology was losing its dogmatic narrowness, the city remained uncompromising on the question of morals. "Whatever efforts you have made heretofore, Christian magistrates," said the pastor Gallatin in his address, "you must henceforth redouble them, in order the more effectively to make virtue flourish and to repress vice and, above all, luxury, impiety and impurity."[5]

In the seventeenth century the adulterer might still be punished with death, but imprisonment or the pillory were

[1] G. Vallette, *J. J. Rousseau genevois* (1911), 9–10; P. M. Masson, *La Religion de J. J. Rousseau* (1916), I, 9.
[2] Picot, *Histoire de Genève*, III, 236.
[3] Vallette, 10.
[4] Vallette, 8–9.
[5] E. Gallatin, *Sermons sur divers textes de l'Ecriture sainte* (1720), 122. Quoted by Masson, I, 14.

more usual.[1] The drunkard was corrected by exposure in an iron cage. No theatres were permitted, no private theatricals, no cards. Dancing was discouraged, but might be taught to the young English and German nobles who came to complete their education in Geneva.[2] There were severe sumptuary laws and even private carriages were frowned upon: the good Genevese went on horseback or on foot.

Some of these regulations seemed a little severe, and they were in fact being relaxed at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But they had gone to form a higher type of character than existed in most places at the time, and they were unaccompanied by any trace of hypocrisy, which was the bane of contemporary France. In a small city where everyone knew everyone, the hypocrite would have been unmasked at once.[3] Puritanism was popular. The people supported the clergy in opposing the introduction of amusements from France and Italy. It required the greatest efforts to establish a theatre in "the holy city," and the one opened in 1766 was burned down two years later by a group of patriots, while the populace looked on with approval.[4] The Genevese no doubt anticipated Disraeli in believing that life would be tolerable if it were not for its amusements.

Even those who became restive under this theocratic régime did not escape its all-pervading influence. They grew up, whatever their own shortcomings, simple-minded, with a taste for the pleasures of the home and the country,[5] and an instinctive sense of the deeper values of life. This was an example of what could be done by the personality of a single man and a policy applied with logic over a long period of time; and Rousseau had some reason for observing

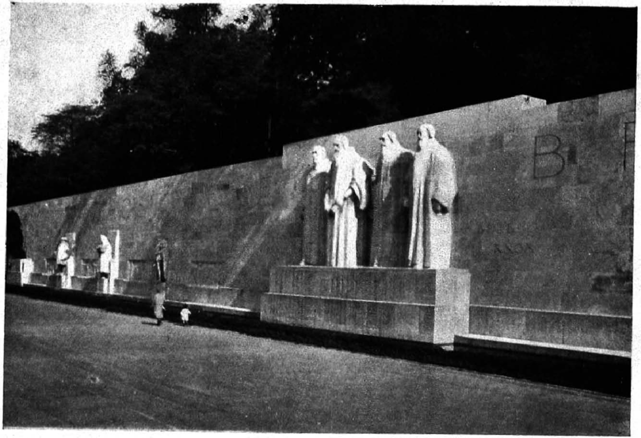
[1] Picot, III, 140. In 1609 two persons were executed for polygamy. For morals and the penal code in seventeenth century Geneva, see Picot, III, 140–150, and Vallette, 12–13.

[2] E. Ritter, *La Famille et la Jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*. 2e ed., *Annales de la Société J. J. R.*, XVI (1924–5), 1926. Pp. 90, 95.

[3] Ritter, 49.

[4] Vallette, 15.

[5] The feeling for nature was then most characteristic of the English and the Swiss. See De Reynold, *J. J. Rousseau et la Suisse* in *La Suisse une et diverse*, 190.



GENEVA.

"Intransigent in its ideal, the Protestant Rome was at once a citadel and an outpost jutting into Catholic Europe" (Ch. I).

The *International Monument of the Reformation* stands on the site of the wall built in Calvin's time (1543) and near the scene of the Escalade of 1602.

(in another connection, it is true) that he "had seen that everything depended radically on politics and that a people would never be different from what its institutions made it."[1]

The population of Geneva was composed of patricians, burgesses or citizens, "habitants" and "natifs." On taking an oath of obedience to the laws, the newcomer was admitted as "habitant" and his children were called "natifs." He might, however, on payment of a tax, be accepted as a burgess, in which case his descendants would be citizens by hereditary right.[2] Out of a total population of about 20,000, only 1,300 were citizens in the time of Rousseau. This class, which, with the aristocracy, alone exercised political power, was itself divided into a variety of grades. A burgess might be anything from a poor artisan to a pastor, a professor or a well-to-do manufacturer. On becoming a member of the Council of the Two Hundred, he found himself in the highest rank of his class: on being elected to the Council of the Twenty-five, he became a patrician.[3] The patricians held the reins of governments pretty firmly in their own hands; but the citizens formed the General Council which assembled every year in the Cathedral of Saint-Pierre to elect the Syndics.[4] Each citizen was a free man and a member of that corporate body which was the sovereign people.

The national character of the Genevese might be described as the quintessence of the Swiss character. It contained that mixture of traditionalism in ethics with radicalism in thought which is characteristic of Protestant nations; and, in fact, many of Rousseau's qualities, which critics have regarded as English or Germanic, belong simply to the Protestant tradition in Europe.[5] The influence of Great Britain in Switzerland had, however, been considerable since the days when John Knox was "pastor of the English

[1] *Confessions*, IX.
[2] Th. Dufour, quoted by L. Ducros, *J. J. Rousseau : de Genève à l'Ermitage* (1908), 17 note.
[3] Ritter, 52–3.
[4] Ibid., 48.
[5] Cf. Vallette, Introduction, 14; De Reynold, 190–1.

residents and citizen of Geneva." Rousseau himself, through Saint-Preux, speaks of the introduction into the city of English ways of living, and appears to attribute to England something of the gravity of his compatriots and their taste for solid learning.[1] In Rousseau's time, a large number of Genevese, like Firmin Abauzit and J. A. Turrettini, had studied in our universities or were correspondents of the Royal Society.[2] The "singularity" of the Genevese, which used to strike many observers, was due partly to the fact that they carried their qualities further and with more unanimity than other people—except perhaps the Scottish Puritans—partly to the position of the city, nearly surrounded as it was by Catholic and monarchical states.

Proud of his religion and his country, jealous of his liberties and somewhat distrustful as a consequence of his struggle to maintain them, successful as a rule in business whether as banker, merchant or manufacturer; restless and given to travelling, but in the last resort fervently patriotic and determined to remain himself—such was the citizen of Geneva at the close of the seventeenth century.

It was the fate of Jean Jacques Rousseau to be born at a time when this excellent tradition was weakening, and in a family which had begun decidedly to fall away from it.

[1] *Nouvelle Héloïse*, VI, Lettre 5.

[2] Texte, 106–7; De Reynold, 185–6 (*L'Evolution de la Littérature romande*). The influence was, of course, reciprocal.

Chapter II.

THE ROUSSEAU FAMILY

In 1711 Geneva contained 18,500 inhabitants. The population was only in part autochthonous. There had been a considerable influx of refugees after the dragonnades and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But the principal immigrants—those to whom the republic owed its greatness and originality—had settled there during the sixteenth century. These were the Italian Protestants, the families of Sismondi, De la Rive, Turrettini and Burlamaqui, which were to give to Geneva some of her most brilliant scholars and divines; and there were also the French Huguenots of the time of Henri II.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was mainly of native stock, but he had nearly as much French blood in his veins, and among his forbears were the Italians De la Rive,[1] who came from the Ligurian Alps.

Didier Rousseau, a Parisian bookseller, had taken refuge in Geneva in 1549: he became a burgess in 1555.[2] His grandson, Jean Rousseau,[3] was the great-grandfather of the philosopher. A typical member of the old Genevese middle-class, frugal and industrious, Jean Rousseau left a fortune of 31,000 florins.[4] He had been a watchmaker, and this remained the trade of Jean Jacques' grandfather, David, and of his father, Isaac. To this side of the family Jean Jacques owed his singularity, his fiery temperament and his readiness to suffer persecution and exile for his beliefs.

It was from the family of his mother, Suzanne Bernard, that he derived his taste for literature. Her ancestors were peasants from a neighbouring village, who had settled in the city towards the end of the sixteenth century. Samuel

[1] Ritter, *La famille et la jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, 2e éd., 36–7.
[2] Ibid., 23–5. [3] Second of that name. [4] Ritter, 55–7.

Bernard, born in 1597, had married his employer's daughter and become a wealthy cloth-merchant.[1] He left several children, including two sons, Jacques and Samuel. Samuel was an exemplary character, and Jacques was the black sheep of the family. This obstinate sinner was hauled four times before the Consistory for his incontinence, made to express contrition, fined and imprisoned. At the age of twenty-three he married and settled down. He was father of Suzanne, and maternal grandfather of Jean Jacques.[2]

The Bernards were a cultured family. Samuel, the cloth-merchant, had possessed a remarkably good library and had doubtless been one of the best-read business men of his time.[3] His son Samuel was a minister and lecturer in mathematics at the Academy of Calvin. On both sides, therefore, Jean Jacques Rousseau came of good middle-class families.

During the lifetime of Jean Rousseau and Samuel Bernard, life and manners in Geneva might be compared, with qualifications, to those of Victorian England. It was an age of discipline, hard work and piety: Calvin would still have recognised his flock. But towards the end of the century, a new influx of Huguenots from France had brought with them a tone of gallic sprightliness and a taste for novelty, alarming to the guardians of the established order. It was these newcomers who inspired the intellectual Renaissance of Geneva at the beginning of the eighteenth Century, a Renaissance marked by a liberal movement in theology and a growing interest in the natural sciences.[4] They also introduced the sociability of their race. The dourness of the previous generations could hardly have survived much longer; and it was soon perceived—or so the pastors imagined—that a tinge of worldliness was creeping over the life of the city. Jean Jacques' parents, in fact, found themselves living in an age when the old discipline was beginning to seem a little irksome.

* * *

[1] Ritter, 67. [2] Ibid., 68–75. [3] Ibid., 68.

[4] Cf. De Reynold, *La Suisse une et diverse*, 154 (*La Suisse romande*) and 173–4 (*L'Evolution de la littérature romande*).

Isaac Rousseau was a "man of pleasure," good-natured, quarrelsome and unreliable. At one time he gave dancing-lessons—of which the Consistory disapproved. He was subject to queer impulses and fits of restlessness, when he liked to leave his work and travel.[1] When he fell in love with Suzanne Bernard, she advised him to take a journey abroad and forget her. He took the journey. On his return, he settled down as a watchmaker, and in 1704 he and Suzanne decided to marry. They were already brother and sister-in-law, Isaac's sister Théodora being the wife of Gabriel Bernard.[2]

Suzanne was distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments, and she had had many admirers. "It was not without difficulty," writes Jean Jacques, "that my father had obtained her."[3] She was almost a patrician, and brought with her a dowry of 16,000 florins to the bare 1,500 possessed by Isaac. Her uncle, Samuel Bernard,[4] pastor of Petit Saconnex, had given her a good education. She could draw, play and sing, and had some talent for writing verses.

The wedding took place on the 2nd of June, 1704; in 1705 they had a son, François. The young people lived with Suzanne's mother, Madame Jacques Bernard, and Isaac apparently did not get on with her. At all events, he was soon seized with one of those amusing fits of wanderlust which were common in his family. He packed his tools, left his wife and child and went to Constantinople, where he worked for several years as watchmaker to the Protestant colony of Pera, and where his regular attendance at divine service greatly edified the Dutch chaplain. At last, in 1710, came news of the unsympathetic mother-in-law's death; and in September of the following year, Isaac returned to his family.[5]

[1] See Ritter, 94, 95, 102, 113.

[2] These two had been married in 1699, and *not*, as Jean Jacques believed, on the same day as his parents. See Ritter, 101.

[3] *Confessions*, I.

[4] Jean Jacques believed her to be the daughter of Samuel Bernard, probably because he had never been told of her father, the scapegrace Jacques.

[5] For this period of Isaac Rousseau's life, see Ritter, 111–18.

Chapter III.

THE WATCHMAKER'S SON, 1712–22

AT the beginning of the eighteenth century, Geneva was still surrounded by picturesque walls and towers like those which survive at Fribourg and on the Musegg at Lucerne. There had formerly been an old bridge, with wooden shops and mills running out on piles into the river, but this had been destroyed by fire in 1670. The city of to-day has been largely rebuilt or modernised; but until the middle of the nineteenth century, Geneva preserved its medieval aspect. Of its charm we can judge from the enthusiasm of travellers. Nearly all agree that it was unique. "A bird's nest of a place," says Ruskin. . . . "The most lovely spot, and the most notable, without any possible dispute, of the European universe."[1]

The Rhone emerging from the Lake divides the city into two portions: on the right bank, in Rousseau's time, was the lower town and plebeian quarter of Saint-Gervais; on the left bank, dominated by the twin towers of the Cathedral, lay the upper town or quarter of Saint-Pierre, which was the home of the patricians and wealthier citizens. Suzanne's house[2] stood at the point where the narrow Grand' Rue reached the top of the hill, within a short distance of the Cathedral and the ramparts: here on the 28th of June, 1712, her second son was born. She died ten days later of puerperal fever. The child was baptised in Saint-Pierre and received the names of his godfather, Jean Jacques Valençan, a cloth merchant from Dauphiné.[3]

[1] *Præterita*, ed. 1899, II, 121.

[2] This old house, No. 6 of the Grand 'Rue (Rue de la Boulangerie de Bise) was on the site of the present No. 40, where a bronze tablet commemorates the philosopher's birthplace.

[3] Ritter, 119–20, 125.

When Jean Jacques was big enough to walk, it was a joy to explore the mysteries of the city with his father and brother. They would go out on summer evenings through the old gate under the Tour Baudet—how big it looked in those days!—and on to the terrace of the Treille. Above them rose the old town, concealing behind dark, inscrutable walls its story of suffering and heroism. In front, down the slope, you could see the ramparts and bastions which Calvin had built a century and a half before; and away in the distance, the plain where the white, muddy Arve joined the limpid Rhone. At other times, they went down the hill by narrow streets and overhanging penthouses to the Place de Coutance, where the watchmakers foregathered, and Isaac met his friends. Two bridges and an island had to be crossed on the way. On the island they stopped by the grim tower which had once been the Savoyard fortress, and where the patriot Berthelier had been beheaded by the Duke's men, in the days before Geneva became free.

Saint-Gervais was a different world, gloomy and forbidding at first, but full of allurements when you had been there once or twice. It was a maze of alleys like sword-slits running through blocks of white, shuttered houses, five and six stories high. The very height of these buildings was part of the romance of Genevese history. In the sixteenth century the city had begun to spread over the plain; but Calvin had demolished the suburbs and brought everyone within the new circle of walls. As there was no ground-space for new houses, those already existing had to be raised higher.

Isaac's sister, who, like his wife, was named Suzanne, had come to keep house for him; and there was a good-natured servant, Jacqueline Danel. Isaac's character did not make for a very orderly household, but the child's early life was at least surrounded with kindliness and affection.

At the age of six, Jean Jacques had his first reading-lessons. His eyes had often dwelt with curiosity on the rows of old quartos and duodecimos, in their rich brown leather, which formed his mother's library. And when his father

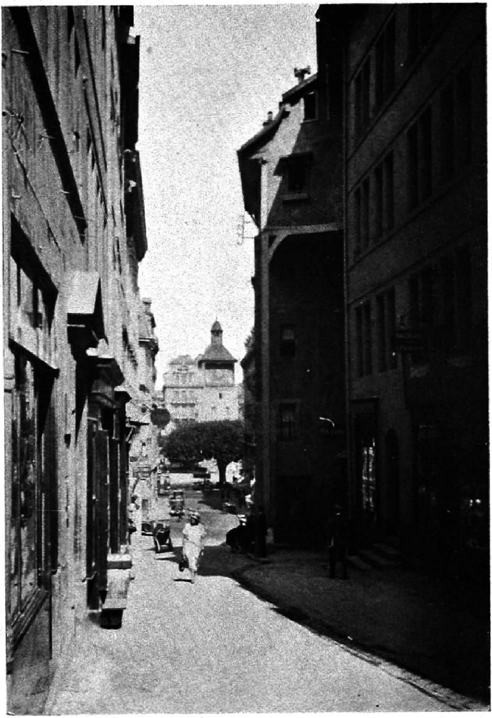
took a romantic novel from the shelf, the child was all eagerness to acquire the key to this mysterious language. One world had opened for him the day when he was first taken on to the Treille—the world of Nature. Now his father was introducing him to the realm of imagination and art—a different one, and equally enchanting. It was not many months before he could find his way into it alone. At night, after supper, they would take down the *Astrée*, the *Cassandre*, or the *Grand Cyrus*, and read to each other in turn. They became so absorbed that the hours slid by unheeded, and only the growing light in the casement, and the twittering of the swallows outside, informed them that it was daybreak and time to go to bed.

To grow up in the family of a master-watchmaker implied a sort of education that was not to be despised. Watchmaking was one of the most honourable crafts in Geneva. To enter the Corporation, the young burgess must have served five years as an apprentice, and for his masterpiece, have made from beginning to end a repeating-watch or an alarm-watch. He must be a citizen, and pay an entrance-fee of 300 florins. Isaac Rousseau was one of about a hundred master-watchmakers. As a class, they were well-read and well-versed in politics.[1]

Isaac had been elected in 1715 to the public-office of Collector: with a little diligence, he might have received further promotion in the State.[2] But he seems to have been going down in the world. He sold the house in the Grand' Rue, and in 1720 moved his shop to No. 73, rue de Coutance, in the more modest quarter of Saint-Gervais. The region was known as the "Dômes," because the sloping roofs of the houses, supported by tall pillars, formed a sort of arcade along the street.[3]

Jean Jacques was now reading other books besides novels. He tells us that there were "good books" in the library:

[1] G. Vallette, *J. J. Rousseau genevois*, 20–3.
[2] Ritter, 125–6.
[3] See L. J. Courtois, *Chronologie critique de la Vie et des Oeuvres de J. J. Rousseau* (*Annales de la Société J. J. Rousseau*, t. XV, 1923), Geneva, 1926, p. 4.



"At other times they went down the hill, by narrow streets and overhanging penthouses" (Ch. III).

Geneva: the Rue de la Cité.

not only Le Sueur's *History of the Church and the Empire* and Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*, but Molière's comedies, La Bruyère's *Characters*, and Plutarch's *Lives*. He would read them aloud while his father was working in the shop. Stories of the Escalade and of the recent victory at Vilmergen, all the history of republican Geneva, and of those older city-states that were prototypes of his own, formed the background of his imaginative life. How he longed to be like the heroes of whom he read in Plutarch, to possess a spirit proof against adversity, capable of high achievement! Plutarch was a second Bible to the Genevese. One day, at table, Jean Jacques was describing how the Roman, Gaius Mucius, afterwards known as Scaevola, the "left-handed," was threatened with torture for attempting to assassinate Lars Porsena: "when they threatened to do this," the boy explained, "Gaius thrust his hand into an altar-fire and held it there until it was burnt off!" To suit the action to the words, Jean Jacques laid his own hand on a hot chafing-dish, to the great alarm of the company.

Stories of Rome and Sparta accorded well with the spirit of the time. It was an age of patriotic fervour. One evening —it must have been about the year 1721[1]—the Regiment of Saint-Gervais had returned from field-parade, and after supper most of the companies, officers and men, assembled in the Place Saint-Gervais and began to dance by torchlight to the sound of fife and drum. Hands were joined, forming a long winding chain round the fountain; while the glare of the torches, the music, the animation of the scene, affected everyone with an indescribable sensation. The hour was late and many people were in bed; but all got up, children ran out into the streets; soon all the inhabitants of the quarter were assembled. The dance over, people embraced, laughed, drank each other's health. "Jean Jacques," exclaimed Isaac to his son, "love your country. You see these good Genevese? They are all friends, they are all brothers, joy and concord reign among them. . . . One day you will

[1] Courtois, *Chronologie Critique*, p. 5, note 2.

see other peoples; but even if you travel as much as your father, you will never find their like."

"I feel," writes Rousseau, "that this sight, which touched me so deeply, would have no attraction for a thousand others; one needs eyes made to see it, and a heart made to feel it."[1]

Jean Jacques was never sent to school: his father had taught him to read, and instructed him in the elements of cosmography. The boy had heard that the world was round; but he imagined that the dome of the sky formed the outer shell of the globe, and that people lived in its centre. It was necessary to eradicate this illusion, and Isaac had invented a direct method of his own. A ball of tripoli, with pins stuck all over it for men, represented the world; but when Isaac came to explain the Antipodes, the probable fate of these pins, with their heads downwards, greatly puzzled Jean Jacques. The Copernican system had led him to imagine the sun as occupying in some sort the top of the universe, and he really could not see why, at night, everyone did not fall into the sky.[2] Perhaps Isaac himself had not altogether grasped the law of gravitation, and his lessons may have been rather obscure in consequence.

Isaac Rousseau was over-indulgent as a rule, but subject to outbursts of untimely violence. On one occasion when, by accident or design, Jean Jacques' Latin primer was found torn, the boy was shut up in a garret for several days.[3] Another time, his father sent him to bed without supper, on account of some frolic. He had to pass through the kitchen on his way to bed. The family were seated round the fire at that moment, and a large joint, turning on the spit, was filling the room with the most appetising odour. Jean Jacques went to each person in turn, saying good-night; and on completing the round, he could not resist the temptation to cast a sidelong glance at the joint, to bow to it also,

[1] *Lettre à D'Alembert*, ed. Brunel (Hachette, 1921), 199, note.

[2] Ritter, 124. The story is based on a fragment of the *Confessions* not utilised in the final draft.

[3] Reminiscences communicated in 1788 to the *Journal de Genève*, by J. A. Martin. Quoted by Ritter, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–3.

and say in a wistful tone: "Adieu, rôti." Everyone was so amused that he was allowed to stay for supper after all.

He rarely needed correction. When he was not with his aunt Suzon, watching her embroider or listening to those old-world songs which came back in after life to haunt his memory, he was in his father's workshop; and this was the scene that he pictured many years later, when dedicating the *Discourse on Inequality* to his fellow-citizens of the Republic:

> I cannot recall without the most grateful emotion the memory of the virtuous citizen . . . who often spoke to me in childhood of the respect that was due to you. I still see him, living on the work of his hands and replenishing his soul with the sublimest truths. I see Tacitus, Plutarch and Grotius lying among the instruments of his craft. I see at his side a cherished son, receiving with too little profit the tender instructions of the best of fathers. But if the errors and wildness of youth made me forget such wise lessons for a time, I have been happy enough at last to discover that whatever leaning one may have for vice, it is difficult for an education to be lost for ever, when the heart has gone into it.

That is something like a testimonial! Jean Jacques even exaggerates the merits of his upbringing. "If ever child received a sane and reasonable education, it was I. . . . My father, although a man of pleasure, was not only of tried integrity, but deeply religious. A gallant man in society, and a Christian in private life. . . ."[1] We presume that he was also a Christian in public. Even before Jean Jacques' birth the clergy had begun to complain of the perfunctory manner in which the faithful were attending divine service. A large part of the congregation would wait until the reading of the lesson was over, and take their places just before the sermon, which offered more novelty. They gave the impression of coming to church in order to meet their friends and exchange news. They had even begun to smoke during service in certain of the Temples. And sometimes—most scandalous of all—there would be a scuffle and clatter of feet at the back of the building as a crowd of little boys, who had been playing outside, rushed in

[1] *Confessions*, II.

to avoid the officers on their rounds; for the city had a corps of police detailed for the purpose of Sunday-discipline.[1]

The sermons of the time allude frequently to these scandals; but it must not be supposed that the holy city was becoming more than a little lax in the external practices of religion. Isaac Rousseau, no doubt, took his sons to church every Sunday—more often perhaps; and it was these early impressions of childhood: the austere melody of the Psalms, the sermon which treated of ethics rather than dogma, the dignified simplicity of the Calvinist service,[2] and especially its prayers, that gave a permanent bent to Rousseau's religious nature and survived the long period that he was to pass as a Catholic.[3]

* * *

And so all might have gone well, and Jean Jacques have grown up in Geneva and followed the trade of his ancestors. Destiny willed it otherwise.

The "virtuous citizen," his father, was hot-blooded and irascible. Twice he had been implicated in broils with Englishmen.[4] An ardent sportsman, he would occasionally take his gun and dog into the country; and at night, bringing the hare or partridge he had shot, "return home, exhausted and torn with brambles, but satisfied with the day's sport."[5] In June, 1722, he and a friend wished to cross some hay fields on a shooting expedition. The fields belonged to Captain Pierre Gautier, who was in the adjoining road at the time and prevented the sportsmen from invading his property. There was a quarrel, and Isaac levelled his gun at the captain. Meeting Gautier a few months later in the Rue des Orfèvres,[6] Isaac looked his man in the eyes and proposed a duel. The Captain replied that "he had sometimes put hand on sword," but that with men of Rousseau's kind he only used a stick; whereupon Isaac drew his sword and struck Gautier in the face. The antagonists were

[1] Masson, I, 9, 10, 25.
[2] See Masson, I, 27–33.
[3] See Ritter, 2nd ed., p. 234.
[4] Ritter, 95–99.
[5] *Emile*.
[6] Now, the Rue de la Confédération.

separated and Isaac was cited before the Council; when he failed to appear, an order was issued for his arrest.[1]

He had left the city, however, and settled at Nyon, a few miles away, in the Pays de Vaud.

Jean Jacques and François did not go with him, but were handed over to the care of Gabriel Bernard, who had married their aunt, Théodora Rousseau. Bernard was an engineer, employed at this time on the fortifications: a man of similar character to his brother-in-law, if less violent and mercurial. Neither he nor his wife had any talent for the rearing of children, and happily for Jean Jacques, they hastened to get rid of him. He was sent, with his cousin, Abraham Bernard, to board with pastor Lambercier in the village of Bossey, at the foot of the great limestone cliff known as the Salève. It was in October, 1722.

[1] Ritter, 131–4.

Chapter IV.

AT THE FOOT OF THE SALÈVE, 1722–4

ABRAHAM BERNARD was tall and thin; he had a little red face, puckered up like a ripe apple: a gentle and inoffensive child. Jean Jacques was small, with black hair, vivacious eyes, and great personal charm. The two boys naturally understood each other and were soon inseparable. They found an excellent home in the parsonage at Bossey. M. Lambercier[1] made them work regularly at Latin and mathematics, and his sister Gabrielle looked after them with the kindness and solicitude of a mother.

One or two unpleasant episodes hardly affected the serenity of the two years they spent there. Jean Jacques had the greatest affection for Mademoiselle Lambercier. When she was making him repeat his catechism in church, and he hesitated or made a slip, nothing gave him more pain than to see her anxiety; and the thought of her displeasure was generally enough to restrain him in his pranks. Like all boys, however, he and his cousin were mischievous, and she had to warn them that one day she would give them a beating if they were not careful. The day came; but Jean Jacques[2] found a certain pleasure as well as pain in the punishment, and was tempted to invite its repetition. Perhaps Mademoiselle Gabrielle did not beat him hard enough. At all events he resisted the temptation through unwillingness to distress her; but some days later another thoughtless misdeed brought about another beating, with the same results. This time Mademoiselle Lambercier perceived how he was taking it and stopped at once; and

[1] Jean Jacques Lambercier (b. 1676) came from Neuchâtel and had formerly been pastor in the Vaudois valleys of Piedmont (see Ritter, p. 141–2).

[2] He was about eleven years of age at this time, and not eight as he believed when writing the *Confessions*.

thereafter he and Abraham were treated as grown-up boys.

The instinct thus aroused had evidently something precocious and abnormal about it. It persisted for some years, and when any woman attracted him, a perverse and ludicrous feeling was apt involuntarily to colour his ideas of love. In the origins of mental malady, this early deviation of the instincts must probably be reckoned as a symptom.[1]

The garden and meadows, the slopes of the Salève and the great cliffs with their horizontal bands of rock which glowed every evening in the sunset, gave Jean Jacques a passion for country life that never left him. When the pastor decided that a shade-tree was needed at one end of the terrace, Jean Jacques and his cousin took part in the ceremony of planting a young walnut, and were godfathers to the tree. A circular hollow was left around it, and it was watered every day. Not far off, the boys planted a tree of their own, a willow-cutting; and constructed with great pains a hidden aqueduct leading from the walnut-tree. True, M. Lambercier put an end to this unwarrantable means of diverting the water from its principal object, but they had had the enjoyment of building the aqueduct, and thought little of its loss.

Abraham was inordinately timid in the dark, while his companion prided himself on freedom from this weakness. He even boasted of it; so much so that one night the minister asked him to go across to the church and fetch the big Bible which had been left in the pulpit.

Jean Jacques crossed the graveyard courageously and opened the church-door. But no sooner was he inside than he heard a vague rumbling which seemed to come from the roof, like a mysterious voice. He had brought no lantern. In the vast, uncertain gloom, his hair stood on end: he fled. Outside, he was met by the small dog, Sultan, who leaped up and reassured him; but Sultan refused to come when he ventured back into the church. This time it was worse: Jean Jacques' wits deserted him, he began to grope for the

[1] See Appendix, Note I.

pulpit but in the wrong direction; he stumbled over the benches; then suddenly, seized with a nameless terror, again fled from the building. He was about to give in and return to the house, when, by way of an open window, he heard M. Lambercier's boisterous laughter, and Mademoiselle Gabrielle asking about Jean Jacques and telling the servant to light the lantern and go in search. He knew from the laughter what he would have to expect: it was like a cold douche to his scattered wits. Before the search-party could set out, he had darted back into the church, found the Bible, and carried it in triumph to the minister.[1]

The parsonage at Bossey was certainly a place of happiness for Jean Jacques. Every detail of the house and of his life there imprinted itself on his memory: M. Lambercier's study, with the barometer on the wall, and the calendar, and the big print of all the Popes of Rome; the raspberry cane that overshadowed the open window, and the swallow which would sometimes fly into the room. He remembered the maid and the manservant at work; he remembered a fly alighting on his hand as he repeated his lesson one day.

A terrible misunderstanding brought this period of felicity to a close. The maid had been cleaning Mademoiselle Gabrielle's combs, and had put them to dry: coming for them later, she found that the teeth of one of them had been broken. Jean Jacques was suspected: the circumstances pointed to him. But he denied obstinately, and as he was innocent, nothing would induce him to confess. The matter was regarded as serious ("it deserved to be," says Rousseau), not because of the comb, but because of the denial, obstinacy in falsehood being a most heinous offence in a Protestant household. Uncle Bernard was sent for. The child, however, remained obdurate, and his cousin having committed some misdeed, Bernard gave them both a severe thrashing. It was not the pain so much as the injustice which troubled Rousseau, and he passed the night in an agony of helpless indignation. A momentary

[1] *Emile*, Book II.

estrangement sprang up between the pastor and the boys, and shortly afterwards Gabriel Bernard took them away from Bossey.[1]

* * *

The Lamberciers were unsophisticated folk. In former times, when they made a journey, the pastor had been used to taking his sister pillion on the pony; and this custom had provoked ridiculous imputations. M. Benoît de Pontverre, priest of the neighbouring village of Confignon, had written a pamphlet against several ministers of Geneva, in which Lambercier was satirised and slandered. Certain parishioners too had brought charges against him, and in 1713 a thorough enquiry had been made into his conduct by the Council. The result was to rehabilitate him.[2] M. de Pontverre omitted from the second edition of his pamphlet the odious insinuations he had made; the pastor's accusers formally recognised him as "a man of honour and worthy of his charge."[3] So far from being removed, as he certainly would have been had the accusations been well-founded, he was left in charge of the parish, which he continued to serve creditably for twenty-five more years.[4]

"Although churchman and preacher," writes Jean Jacques, "M. Lambercier was a real believer, and almost as good in deed as in word. By gentle and judicious precepts he and his sister cultivated the principles of piety which they found in my heart. . . . Far from being bored during the sermon, I never went out from it without being secretly touched and making resolutions to live better, resolutions in which I rarely failed when I thought of them."[5]

No one, before or after, exercised a better influence on Jean Jacques.

[1] A reference in the *Confessions* to the passage near Bossey of the King of Sardinia and his retinue proves that the boys did not leave the village before 23rd August, 1724. (See Ritter, 149).

[2] Ritter (2nd ed.), 142–7. [3] Masson, I, 22–3.

[4] Ritter, 148. [5] *Confessions*, II.

Chapter V.

THE APPRENTICE, 1724–8

Jean Jacques and Abraham passed the winter months of 1724–5[1] in the Grand' Rue at Geneva with Gabriel Bernard, who gave them lessons in drawing and Euclid. They were still great friends. Together they made cages, flutes, kites, drums and cross-bows. Abraham seemed to grow taller and leaner every day, and when out together in the streets they looked a quaintly-assorted couple. But it was Abraham who was the butt of the schoolboys. "Barnâ Bredanna" they called him; and no sooner did the big boy and the little boy appear, than "Barnâ Bredanna!" resounded on every side. Then Jean Jacques' eyes would sparkle, and he would fall upon his cousin's tormentors; but the enemy was strong and numerous and the two friends soon learned to keep under cover.

François Rousseau had been apprenticed to a watchmaker, after his father's flight to Nyon; and it was now a question of choosing a career for Jean Jacques. Was he to become a watchmaker, a lawyer or a minister? His own inclination was to be a minister, as he thought it would be fine to preach. But the income from his mother's estate was insufficient to pay for his education at the Academy, and his father and uncle were not the men to make a sacrifice. As to his grandfather, David, who was living with Gabriel Bernard at this time, he was nearly eighty-three, and he had never been much interested in young boys or even in his own grandchildren.[2] Jean Jacques was placed first of all in the office of M. Masseron, the town-clerk, to

[1] Rousseau speaks (*Confessions*, II) of passing two or three years with his uncle: it was really five or six months (about November, 1724, to April, 1725). See Ritter, 149. But no doubt the apprentice frequently visited Gabriel Bernard's house during the three years that followed.

[2] "Calus héréditaire qui concourt à expliquer le plus grave des torts qu'on reproche à Rousseau." (Ritter, 122). Cf. Vallette, 28, 56.

learn the profession of notary; but his master called him an ass and dismissed him after a few weeks. Later, on the 26th of April, 1725, his uncle apprenticed him to a young engraver named Abel Ducommun, and paid three hundred livres for him. According to the deed of apprenticeship, the boy was to remain five years with his master, who undertook to board and lodge him and "to bring him up and instruct him in the fear of God and of good morals, as a father of a family should."[1]

He went to live with Ducommun in the Rue des Etuves on May 1st, but so far from treating Jean Jacques as his son, Ducommun used him harshly and took the joy out of his life. Nevertheless, he was allowed a good deal of liberty, especially at week-ends, when he would visit the Bernards or his other uncle, Antoine Fazy. From time to time, when he had a longer holiday, he went to see his father at Nyon, and in 1726 he found a stepmother in the house, a lady three years older than Isaac. It was at Nyon, too, that he met Mademoiselle Goton and Mademoiselle Vulson. The former was a girl of his own age, who encouraged him in the bad instinct that the pastor's sister had detected. Mademoiselle Vulson was a young lady of twenty-two. She had other admirers, but Jean Jacques fell seriously and romantically in love with her: when she married, she sent her young gallant a box of chocolates and a pair of gloves. He, however, swore never to see the perfidious creature again. For Mademoiselle Goton his feelings took a different form. He persuaded her to treat him as a naughty child is treated, from the motives we have seen[2]; and she assented, perhaps regarding it as no more than a funny game.

Back in Geneva, he and Abraham went out a good deal together. They were highly entertained by Signor Gamba-Corta, the Italian showman and apothecary, who had received permission from the Council to sell "a very salutary balm,"[3] and availed himself of it to give performances with his

[1] Baron de Grenus, *Glanures*, Geneva, 1829, p. 119. Quoted by Ritter, 150.
[2] See Appendix, Note II.
[3] Dr Léon Gautier, *La médecine à Genève jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*. Geneva, 1906, p. 311. Quoted by Courtois, *Chronologie*, 8.

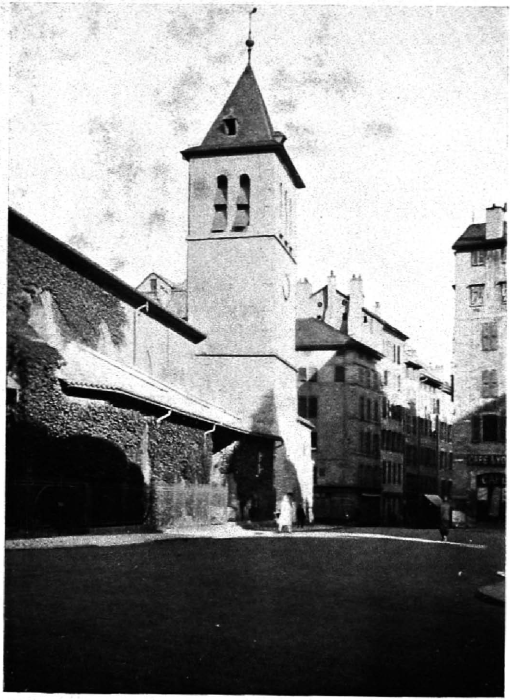
marionettes. Carried away as usual by the latest novelty, the boys made marionettes of their own and produced little comedies at the Bernard's house, at which Gabriel and Théodora had to assist.

Life with Ducommun, on the other hand, was far from pleasant. This was not altogether Ducommun's fault. The man was young and inexperienced in handling boys; and he had two other apprentices, Bâcle and Verrat, lively and irresponsible youths, whose influence on the newcomer was deplorable. Not that the engraver's art was disagreeable to Jean Jacques; but he amused himself, when the master was not looking, by engraving little medals for himself and his friends. Ducommun caught him at it, accused him of coining false money, and beat him cruelly. Harshness often ends in producing the meaner vices, and lying and pilfering were the results in this instance. Verrat, whose mother grew some very fine asparagus in her garden, managed to persuade Rousseau to steal it regularly for him. Rousseau sold the asparagus in the Place du Molard and gave the proceeds to Verrat, who entertained the apprentice to meals in the town. Jean Jacques also rifled his master's store of apples. . . .

"I must have had a great tendency to degenerate," he says in the *Confessions*. He might have added: "but not more than other boys who have been abandoned by their father and placed with an unsuitable master." The truth is, he was a mischievous apprentice, and the influence of a good home would soon have checked the faults into which he had slipped.[1]

He sought an escape from his troubles by reading. He borrowed books from La Tribu, an old woman who kept a circulating library. Once more he abandoned himself to the world of ideas, he read all kinds of books, good and indifferent; but when La Tribu, with an "air of mystery,"

[1] To judge from the *Confessions*, one might suppose that he was indeed a "worthless scamp" and on the road to perdition. The picture must be taken *cum grano salis*. He unwittingly contradicts it himself a few pages further on, when he imagines what his destiny might have been, had he remained in Geneva.



"At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Geneva was still surrounded by picturesque walls and towers" (Ch. III).

Old Geneva: the Temple de Saint-Gervais, in the lower town, where Rousseau spent most of his childhood.

offered him volumes that were "obscene and licentious," he rejected them. Every week, the three sous which he received as pocket-money went to La Tribu, and she was even paid with cravats, shirts and other articles of clothing.

He had not in the meantime entirely forgotten the lessons of Plutarch. Playing mall on one occasion, he and his friend Plince quarrelled and fought, and he received on his bare head a blow from Plince's mallet that stretched him out and nearly stunned him. In an agony of contrition, and scared by the blood flowing from Rousseau's hair, Plince took him to his mother, who bathed and dressed the wound. Rousseau did not mention the real cause of the accident.[1]

Many of his Sundays were spent with his uncle Antoine Fazy, who had a factory for the manufacture of printed calico at Pâquis, a suburb of Geneva. One day when he and young Fazy were in the drying-room, Jean Jacques was tempted to run his fingers over the rollers of the press. Fazy gave a turn to the wheel, and two of the fingers were trapped and crushed: the nails came out, and it was all the boys could do to staunch the blood. Fazy implored his cousin not to give him away; and Jean Jacques generously told everyone that a heavy stone had fallen on his fingers. The accident obliged him to remain three weeks in bed, a confinement all the more galling as it occured at a time when the citizen-militia were engaged in their annual field-exercise. Jean Jacques belonged to the volunteer-company of his quarter, and had the mortification of hearing the drum outside the bedroom-window as his comrades marched past.[2]

When opportunity arose, Jean Jacques took long, lonely rambles into the country (for he was beginning to love solitude), pushing as far as the castle of Martheray, in Bernese territory.[3] A curious presentiment visited him on one of these occasions. He had been running alone and had sat down to rest, when he entered into a sort of trance,

[1] *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, 4e Promenade.
[2] *Rêveries*, 4e Promenade.
[3] Ritter, *Isaac Rousseau, le père de Jean Jacques*, in *Revue internationale de l'enseignement*, XXI (1891), p. 344, note I.

in which he saw in front of him a castle with its gates and walls. Suddenly, he was in one of the apartments, surrounded by men and women whose faces and even dresses were so distinct and individualised that when, a few moments later, he came to himself, they were indelibly stamped on his memory. Many years afterwards, these circumstances were enacted in real life: he chanced to visit a castle with approaches exactly similar, and met a number of people who were the very same as those he had seen in the vision. A cry of amazement escaped him, but he naturally would not explain his surprise.[1]

The young apprentice did not forget to go to church or to be present at the evening sermon. Of all the preachers whom he heard, none would leave a greater impression than Jean Alphonse Turrettini. The pupil of the Cartesian philosopher Chouet,[2] Turrettini was a man of wide culture who had studied in England and introduced English methods of teaching into Geneva.[3] He held the chair of theology in the Academy of Calvin, of which he had been Rector for some years. His influence had been used to direct the National Church towards Liberal Protestantism, and the scholar and scientist did not find in Geneva the theological intolerance which still prevailed in France. In his lectures, he advocated toleration and free enquiry[4]: when he exalted the Reformation, it was because of the spiritual liberty it had brought.[5]

[1] This story rests on the testimony of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who says he had it from Rousseau, when walking one day in the Bois de Boulogne. (B. de Saint-Pierre, *La Vie et les Ouvrages de J. J. Rousseau*, éd. Souriau, Paris, 1907, p. 103. Told in greater detail on p. 104, note, from an unpublished *Mémoire de ma Vie* by Bernardin). Supposing that Rousseau's memory and imagination did not play him a trick, the experience may have been due to communication from another time-dimension with which everyone may normally be in contact. (See J. W. Dunne, *An Experiment with Time*, 1926.) But, of course, this phenomenon has not been fully investigated. If the experience be regarded as *abnormal*, it is of the greatest pathological interest, as it would show Rousseau, as early as the age of thirteen or fourteen, subject to hallucinations. This, however, does not appear to have been a symptom of his later malady.

[2] 1671–1737.

[3] See Gonzague de Reynold, *Evolution de la littérature romande* in *La Suisse une et diverse*, 174, 187.

[4] Vallette, 16, 17.

[5] *Sermon sur le jubilé de la Réformation de Berne*. Quoted by Masson, I, 199.

> Would it be a design really worthy of the Deity (he asks in one of his sermons) to offer men a few abstract and sterile dogmas, *and simply wish them to believe, without* being constrained to do anything else? . . .[1]
>
> Religion (he writes elsewhere) is a philosophy, the best of the philosophies, which alone leads us to true felicity. This religion is less a doctrine than a rule of life, for the essential thing is to come down to the practice of it; religion consists in practice. To overload a religion with marvels and mysteries is to corrupt it; it is never more fair than in its original simplicity.[2]

Jean Jacques, who may not have grasped the doctrinal significance of Turrettini's words, would at least understand their moral teaching. If only he could always keep alive the impressions of the evening sermon! But he was a queer, complicated creature, involved in circumstances and subject to a temperament over which he had little control. Moreover, at this time, symptoms of nervous disorder were already beginning to reveal themselves:—

> I thus attained my sixteenth year (he writes), anxious and dissatisfied with everything and with myself, lacking the tastes of my class and the pleasures of my age; devoured by desires of whose object I was ignorant, weeping without cause for tears and sighing for I know not what. . . . On Sundays my comrades would come and fetch me after the sermon to go and play with them. I would readily have escaped them, had I been able; but once in the midst of their games, I was *more ardent and went further than any other; difficult to move and to hold back.*[3]

Jean Jacques was subject, in fact, to rapid and periodical changes from despondency to animation. He had received that "fatal gift of heaven," an ardent and sensitive heart, but he had received it in double and treble force. Oliver Goldsmith's[4] father, we are told, taught his family to be "mere machines of pity." Jean Jacques' father had put his son on the way to becoming a machine of feeling and imagination. Neither will nor reason were keeping pace with

[1] *Sermon sur la charité.* Quoted by Masson, I, 199.
[2] *Pensées sur la Religion.* Quoted by Masson, I, 199–200.
[3] *Confessions*, I.
[4] Goldsmith was born the year Rousseau ran away from Geneva, 1728.

emotion and fancy: these flourished uncontrolled, and they were to prove the bane and the felicity of his life.

On Sunday evenings, then, Jean Jacques used to wander out with his friends into the country; and once there, he forgot everything else. On two occasions they had returned to find the city-gates closed and had had to pass the night in the open: next morning, he had been severely beaten by Ducommun. On the 14th of March, 1728, they were over a mile from the city when the retreat was sounded. Jean Jacques ran as fast as he could, but he was still twenty paces off, when the first drawbridge began to rise. "I shuddered (he says) as I saw in the air those terrible horns, sinister and fatal augury of the inevitable lot which this moment was commencing for me."[1]

After the first outburst of misery, he determined not to go back. Next day, he sent a message into the city to his cousin Abraham Bernard to come and say good-bye. It is true that during the last year or so they had seen less and less of each other. Ducommun's reports had perhaps produced a bad impression on Gabriel and his wife: they lived in the upper-town, among the better-class residents, and might be inclined to discourage their son from making a companion of that "child of Saint-Gervais." Abraham came, however, at once, bringing a few presents and a little sword which the fugitive was to wear for some time. "His character was essentially good," says Rousseau. "We were made to love one another."

At this point in the *Confessions*, Jean Jacques pauses to look down the avenue of what might have been, "had he fallen into the hands of a better master":—

> I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father of a family, a good friend, a good workman, a good man in everything. I should have loved my estate, I should perhaps have honoured it; and after passing a life simple and obscure, but sweet and even, I should have died peacefully in the bosom of my own people. Soon forgotten, no doubt, I should at least have been regretted as long as they remembered me.

[1] *Confessions*, I.

Chapter VI.

THE FLIGHT FROM GENEVA, 1728

JEAN JACQUES was wounded and alienated. Ducommun's gibes and beatings rankled in his heart. The city itself, with the rising of that terrible drawbridge, seemed to have turned against him. He had been starved of affection; and he needed help. But he was ashamed to go to M. Lambercier; and if he appeared at Nyon, his father would certainly send him back to the engraver, to whom he still owed two years' work. And so on that Monday morning in March, 1728, Jean Jacques Rousseau shouldered his little bundle and turned his back on Geneva.

In the moment of crisis, a sensitive nature will often react passionately, insanely, by flinging itself over to the opposite extreme to that which has wounded it. The poet Racine, in a fit of resentment less reasonable than Jean Jacques', had once abandoned his Jansenist friends for the life of Paris and the stage: so now Jean Jacques turned to the adversaries of Geneva.

And here was an opportunity and even a sort of invitation. All along the frontiers of Savoy and Protestant Switzerland, a war of conversions was going on. The Sardinian government offered bounties (small ones, it is true) to Protestants who embraced the Roman faith[1]; and anyone from Geneva, Berne or the Pays de Vaud who was in trouble knew that he had only to cross the frontier and announce his contrition, to be made much of by the Catholics.

The soul of the movement, on the Catholic side, was Mgr. de Bernex, Bishop of Annecy and titular Bishop of Geneva. This saintly old man cherished the dream of winning back the city of Calvin to the Roman Church, and himself occupying the seat of his predecessors in Saint-Pierre; and his piety and eloquence helped occasionally to pluck a brand

[1] See L. Ducros, *J. J. Rousseau : de Genève à l'Ermitage*, Paris, 1908, 37.

from the burning, though they contributed less, no doubt, than he imagined. In 1726, during the King of Sardinia's visit to Evian, several conversions were reported by the king's secretary, "and among others (he wrote), Madame de Voyran of a distinguished family, and a Professor of Philosophy; the former from Vevey and the latter from Geneva. . . . ."[1]

Mgr. de Bernex had enlisted the sympathies of Victor-Amedeus II in this work. True, that monarch kept a keen eye on all the grants he disbursed. He was willing, however, to promote the activities of two missions: one, on the western side of the Alps, at Annecy; the other and more important one, in the Hospice of the Holy Spirit at Turin. The *Arciconfraternita dello Spirito Santo*, founded in 1653, was designed more particularly for the conversion of the Vaudois valleys of Piedmont, but prepared to shelter and instruct any willing proselyte who presented himself. The Annecy mission had been founded by King Victor himself in 1715, with a view to securing proselytes from Switzerland: it was under the personal supervision of the Bishop, who had distributed some of his ablest priests in the country-parishes near Geneva.[2]

Prominent in the work of enticing young Calvinists into abjuration was M. Benoît de Pontverre, priest of Confignon. M. de Pontverre belonged to a brotherhood known as "The Gentlemen of the Spoon." More than a century and a half before, a company of Catholic nobles, enemies of the city, had been dining and drinking together in the castle of Barsinel. "Friends," said the Lord of Pontverre, as he raised his spoon to his mouth, "I hope that in a little while we shall thus be devouring the men of Geneva." A league was formed with this object, and a golden spoon hung round the neck became the badge of membership.[3]

Sword and scaling-ladder had now been exchanged for more seductive methods, but M. de Pontverre preserved the

[1] See L. F. Benedetto, *Madame de Warens d'après des documents nouveaux*, Paris, 1914, 51.

[2] For an account of these missions, see Benedetto, 46, 47.

[3] See Jullien, *Histoire de Genève*, p. 141.

aggressive zeal of his predecessors.[1] In the coarse and jovial pamphlet to which allusion has been made, he had caricatured several ministers of Geneva, and he kept a record of the sixty Protestants whom he had persuaded to abjure.[2] Jean Jacques had heard of this enterprising Savoyard, and he wondered what a "gentleman of the spoon" might look like. Confignon was only six miles from Geneva; and, besides, travel held no terrors for Rousseau. To run away, or to emigrate for an indefinite period, was a family habit. His father had relatives living in different capitals of Europe and Asia; and two or three years before, his brother François had decamped without notice and only been heard of later in Germany. Restlessness was in the blood of the Genevese, and particularly of the Rousseau family.[3]

It was on Monday, the 15th of March, that Rousseau turned his back on the city-walls. On Friday, the 19th, the following entry was made in the Records of the Company of Pastors:—

> M. de Rochemont said he had learned that the Sieur Pontverre, priest of Confignon, is drawing away several young men from this city, some of whom have changed their religion. Recommended that the pastors of the quarters where the fathers and mothers of these children lodge, shall be instructed to speak to them of it.[4]

Jean Jacques had doubtless heard of these other deserters, and he had the less hesitation in following their example. Still, as he entered the Catholic country, he could hardly repress a movement of alarm. The mere sight of a priest in his surplice, the mere sound of the viaticum bell, had been enough to scare him in the past. Even now that mortal antipathy for Catholicism, which was part of the national character, rose up within him. He hesitated; but the memory of his troubles was bitter, and he would not go back.

M. de Pontverre received the young Genevese cordially and invited him to dinner. It was a remarkably good

[1] He was apparently *not* a descendant of the Pontverre who had initiated the Brotherhood.

[2] Masson, I. 41.

[3] See Ritter, 101–2.

[4] *Registres de la Vénérable Compagnie des pasteurs de l'Eglise de Genève*, Vol. V, 428. Quoted by Masson, I, 40.

dinner—these Catholic parsonages were famous for their cooking;—and there was a bottle of Frangi, of an excellent vintage. When the priest referred to the errors of Calvinism and to the authority of the Catholic Church, Jean Jacques had not the heart to argue. Perhaps a few qualms of conscience assailed him. This Pontverre was said to be the sworn enemy of Geneva. He was "a sort of missionary who thought of nothing better, for the advancement of the faith, than to write libels against the ministers"[1] of the city; M. Lambercier had been grossly traduced by him. It did not occur to Jean Jacques that he ought to have declined the priest's hospitality: his present experience lulled any doubts he might have had. What they had told him about these Catholic priests was evidently exaggerated. In the intimacy of their homes they were kindness itself. He judged them at least as good as the pastors of Geneva!

M. de Pontverre spoke to him gently of the true doctrine. "God is calling you," he said, and gave him a letter of introduction to a recent convert who lived in Annecy and who would give him further help: Madame de Warens. The fugitive did not perhaps realise that he was now caught in the Catholic machine and was simply being handed on, according to a regular system, from one mission to another. He set out blithely for Annecy, through a country of vineyards and châteaux. His romance was only beginning, and there was no need for hurry. It was Palm Sunday, 21st of March, when he reached the town and called at the house which had been pointed out to him. Madame de Warens had just started for church, but he ran after her and caught her up.[2]

[1] *Confessions*, II.

[2] It was by the little canal separating the house from the garden. "Je dois me souvenir du lieu (writes Rousseau), je l'ai souvent depuis mouillé de mes larmes. . . . Que ne puis-je entourer d'un balustre d'or cette heureuse place! Que n'y puis-je attirer les hommages de toute la terre! Quiconque aime à honorer les monuments du salut des hommes n'en devrait approcher qu'à genoux" (*Confessions*, II).

Jean Jacques' wish has at last been gratified. In 1928, the 200th anniversary of his arrival at Annecy, a monument was inaugurated on July 22nd near the site of Madame de Warens's house and by the little stream which he mentions. It consists of a large semi-circular recess

"Je dois me souvenir du lieu. . . . Que ne puis-je entourer d'un balustre d'or cette heureuse place! que n'y puis-je attirer les hommages de toute la terre!" (*Confessions*, II).

Le Balustre d'Or. Monument inaugurated at Annecy in 1928 on the spot where Rousseau first met his future benefactress (Ch. VI). The house then occupied by Madame de Warens was demolished in 1784.

He had expected a sombre and forbidding old person. What was his joy when he found himself face to face with a charming blonde of twenty-nine! She was of medium height, with a mass of cloudy yellow hair and adorable blue eyes. Jean Jacques felt himself converted already. Whatever its intellectual shortcomings, "a religion preached by such a missionary could not fail to lead to paradise."[1] Though by nature timid and tongue-tied, he found himself immediately at ease with Madame de Warens and able to talk as to an old acquaintance. Her first impulse when she had heard his story, was to forget her religious mission; to make him see how deeply his father would be distressed, and to hint that he should return to Geneva. But she did not urge it.

It was decided that Jean Jacques should be sent on to Turin, to the "hospice for the instruction of catechumens": to organise this kind of journey was part of Madame de Warens's regular duties. It was doubtless she[2] who arranged with Mgr de Bernex to defray the expenses out of the funds set aside for the mission; and the boy was put under the charge of a sort of yokel, M. Sabran, who was travelling in a few days to the capital. . . . Thus with amazing nonchalence Jean Jacques Rousseau prepared to barter away his religion.

* * *

Gabriel Bernard had followed his nephew as far as Confignon, and had then returned and informed his brother-in-law of the boy's flight. On the day after Jean Jacques'

in the ivy-covered wall. Within the recess stands a bust of the citizen of Geneva, and below it a small fountain and the words:

"Au matin de Pâques fleuries de 1728
Jean Jacques Rousseau
Rencontrait ici Madame de Warens."

The balustrade in front is of ornamental iron-work, representing Madame de Warens's favourite flower, the periwinkle; it has been artistically gilded, and would doubtless have satisfied the Philosopher.

[1] *Confessions*, II.

[2] And not M. Sabran. See Benedetto, 112–14; and B. Bouvier, *J.-J. Rousseau*, 45. Rousseau tries to remove from Madame de Warens the suspicion of having dispatched him to Turin, and makes the "yokel" suggest it at dinner. This may be true as far as it goes, but it is almost certain that Madame de Warens organised the journey. She was an agent of the Annecy mission, which on this occasion was simply a link in the chain leading from Confignon to Turin.

departure from Annecy, Isaac and a friend from Nyon arrived on horseback. They saw Madame de Warens and shed a few tears over the fugitive; but they did not attempt to overtake him as they could easily have done, the boy and his companions being on foot.

> My father (writes Jean Jacques) had one of those strong characters which produce the great virtues; he was besides a good father, especially to me. He loved me tenderly; but he also loved his pleasures. . . . He had married again at Nyon. . . . He was growing old, and had no capital to support his old age. My brother and I had some money from my mother, the income of which was to belong to my father during our absence. The idea did not offer itself to him directly, or prevent him from doing his duty; but it worked in secret without his perceiving it himself, and it sometimes slackened his zeal, which he would otherwise have pushed further.[1]

The episode suggested to Jean Jacques the following maxim, which appears as sound as the explanation of his father's conduct: that we should avoid all situations where duty and self-interest are at variance. Isaac's life and character, however, were of more influence on his son than the latter realised. When he had calmly emigrated to Constantinople and left his wife for several years in Geneva; when he had taken refuge in Nyon after the quarrel with Captain Gautier and shifted on to other shoulders the responsibility for his children's welfare; when he failed to get back François who had run away; and finally and not least, on the present occasion, this "best of fathers" did not perhaps foresee that one day his own son would treat the obligations of fatherhood with even greater levity.

While Isaac and his friend were preparing to return home, the fugitive, accompanied by M. Sabran and his wife, was walking light-hearted along the high-road to Italy. With hardly a care for the future, he dreamed of his benefactress, Madame de Warens, and of the vague but brilliant prospects which awaited him beyond the Alps. The road led up the valley of the Arc and over the plateau of Mont Cenis. It

[1] *Confessions*, II; and see Ritter, 114.

was still winter on the heights, but down in the valley leaves and flowers were expanding to the sun and everywhere was the sound of running water.

> I was in that brief but precious moment of life (he writes), when its expansive fulness . . . embellishes the whole of nature in our eyes with the charm of our own existence. . . . Every object which I saw seemed a guarantee of my coming felicity. In the houses I imagined rustic feasts; in the meadows frolicsome games . . ., along the waters, bathing, walking, fishing . . ., on the mountains, vats of milk and cream; a charming idleness, peace, simplicity, the pleasure of going one knew not where.[1]

He was soon to discover where he was going, and in no pleasant fashion. The party reached Turin in a little under three weeks. Letters of introduction had been given to Jean Jacques, and he was admitted at once to the Hospice of the Spirito Santo, on the 12th of April.[2] Seven other catechumens were undergoing instruction at the time, and two more arrived on the 14th. Jean Jacques was not impressed by the character of his fellow-inmates,[3] and indeed the morals he found here were "new" ones. There were two young men—"frightful ruffians"—who spent their time wandering through Spain and Italy, being baptized into the Christian faith in the hospices where they lodged and practising on the credulity of the faithful. Happily they were not both in the house of the Spirito Santo at the same time. One of them, a Levantine named Abraham

[1] *Confessions*, II.

[2] For the following episode, see:—

P. M. Masson, *Le séjour de J. J. Rousseau à l'hospice du Spirito Santo. Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, XXI (1914), pp. 62–71.

L. F. Benedetto, *Madame de Warens*. Paris, 1914, pp. 112–27.

E. Ritter, *La Conversion de Jean Jacques à Turin*. *Journal de Genève*, 11 Dec., 1916.

—— *La Famille et la Jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*. *Annales*, XVI (1924–5). Geneva, 1926, pp. 161–8.

—— *La durée du séjour de J. J. Rousseau à l'hospice du Spirito Santo*. *Annales*, XVII (1926). Geneva, 1928, pp. 193–5.

[3] Rousseau in the *Confessions* does not give the names of any of the inmates or of the staff of the hospice, except the matron, Signora Lorenza. Our knowledge of these names comes from the Register of the Hospice, which has been preserved.

Ruben,[1] from Aleppo, tried to corrupt the newcomer. Jean Jacques did not understand the man; but he perceived enough to be filled with horror and to resist. He spoke so openly about the incident that one of the directors of the Institution rated him soundly for making so much fuss, and explained the mystery: only the matron, Lorenza, openly sympathised with him. But he was not molested again.[2]

In the meantime the priests had commenced his instruction. It is true that he felt no great call to embrace the Roman faith, but the Catholics had treated him kindly, and then it was extremely difficult to draw back.[3] Now, as on a few other occasions in his early life, Jean Jacques was caught in a web of circumstances and failed to cut himself free. A young priest had taken him in hand, and the two bandied passages from St. Augustine and other Fathers. Arguments and passages from Le Sueur's *History of the Church and the Empire*, which Jean Jacques had studied with M. Lambercier, recurred to his mind, and he was thus able to give quotation for quotation. But his converter was probably flattered rather than vexed by a catechumen who had the ability to argue; and, in fact, Jean Jacques did not push his resistance too far.[4] After all, it was a change of sect rather than of religion: a sincere change of sect, and

[1] Rousseau believed he was a Slovene masquerading as a Moor: "Ce faux Africain" he calls him. The explanation is, that he confused Ruben with a Moslem youth from Algiers, Abes Francesco, who however did not enter the hospice until May 25th. As this was more than a month after Rousseau's baptism, his knowledge of this other "Moor" affords evidence that he himself stayed in the hospice for some weeks after his conversion (Benedetto, 116; Courtois, *Chronologie*, 11).

[2] The place left a most disagreeable impression on his mind. Faguet (*Vie de Rousseau*, 1911, p. 14) believes that Rousseau's experiences in the hospice are the source of his "anti-Catholic fanaticism, his anti-Roman frenzy." Proal (*Psychologie de J. J. Rousseau*, 1923) takes a similar view, connecting it with the adventure of Abraham Ruben. The present writer does not see in Rousseau any fanatical prejudice against Catholicism. He disliked its dogmatism, and he condemned "the cruel dogma of intolerance"—a point on which many Catholics would agree with him.

[3] It was not impossible. Another Genevese, a boy of thirteen, who entered the hospice within a few months of Jean Jacques, left it without abjuring. See Masson, article quoted, p. 66.

[4] See also Masson, *La Religion de J. J. Rousseau*, I, 49–53.

much less a change of fundamental beliefs than he realised either now or for twenty years afterwards.[1]

On April 21st, he was taken to the house of the Inquisition, where he abjured the Reformed Faith[2] and received the ceremonial strokes which the Church laid upon the shoulders of the repentant heretic. The Inquisitor's manner on this occasion was somewhat disquieting. After several questions regarding Rousseau's faith, his estate and his family, he "suddenly asked him whether his mother was damned." Rousseau answered that "he would fain hope she was not, and that God might have enlightened her in her last hour." To which the holy man could only reply with an indescribable grimace![3] On April 23rd, came the accessories of baptism in the metropolitan Church of San Giovanni.[4] Rousseau's new Christian names were Joseph François, his god-parents being Giuseppe Andrea Ferrero and Francesca Christina Rocca. The collection produced 5 lire 10 soldi, which were handed to him afterwards.

The Register of the Hospice gives no date for his departure, and it is probable that in view of his rapid conversion, he was kept another six weeks or two months on probation[5] and that the priests continued to instruct and establish him in his new faith.[6] The reasons for supposing this are

[1] The way in which he interprets his conversion in the *Confessions* arises from a natural and perhaps unconscious desire to make an apologia for what he felt had been a discreditable act. "Je ne pus me dissimuler (he writes) que la sainte œuvre que j'allais faire n'était au fond que l'action d'un bandit" (*Confessions*, II). Precisely: to the philosopher of fifty-two, the champion of Liberal Protestantism in Europe, the defender of Religion against the Materialists, this act of his boyhood would appear amazingly frivolous and most embarrassing to explain. To-day we are more inclined to be indulgent to Rousseau on this point than was Rousseau himself.

[2] See Appendix, Note III.

[3] This anecdote rests only on Rousseau's testimony (*Confessions*, II). It is fully discussed by Ritter, *Famille et Jeunesse*, 164–8. After all, there is nothing unlikely in it.

[4] Rousseau's memory deceived him on this point. The Baptism came *after* the ceremony at the Inquisition, not before as he afterwards fancied. See the facsimile of the Register published by Masson (article quoted) and Benedetto.

[5] The *Confessions* imply that he was dismissed at once, with the proceeds of the collection ("a little over twenty francs," says Rousseau. Really a little over five). Masson takes the view that he left the Hospice on April 23 (Article quoted, 67).

[6] This is the view taken by Ritter, *Famille et Jeunesse*, 164.

indirect. There was a young Jewess from Amsterdam named Judith Komes, who was in the hospice of the Spirito Santo at the same time and who stayed eighteen days after her baptism. This was the girl whom Jean Jacques describes in the *Confessions* :—

> She was about my own age, perhaps a year or two older [she was 18]. She had roguish eyes, which sometimes encountered mine. This inspired me with some desire to make her acquaintance; but during nearly two months that she still remained in this house where she had been for three,[1] it was absolutely impossible for me to accost her, so especially was she recommended to our old jailer and so monopolised by the holy missionary who was working with more zeal than diligence at her conversion. She must have been extremely stupid, although she did not look it, for never was instruction longer. The holy man always found her not quite in the right state to abjure. But she grew weary of the confinement and said she wanted to leave the hospice, Christian or no Christian.[2]

Judith Komes had entered the hospice on April 14th, and Rousseau says it was impossible to speak to her during nearly two months—which takes us into June. The Register informs us that Judith was baptised on May 26th and left the hospice on June 13th. Writing the *Confessions* after an interval of thirty-six years, Rousseau remembers so much about her that we may presume he was still in the house of the Spirito Santo when she left it.[3]

[1] Rousseau is mistaken on this point. She entered on April 14.

[2] *Confessions*, II.

[3] See Benedetto, 116, 122–5, and Ritter, *Famille et Jeunesse*, 163. Rousseau's references to the two "bandits who called themselves Moors" point to a similar conclusion. The first of these men, Abram Ruben, left the hospice on May 8th; the second only appeared on May 25th.

Benedetto suggests that Jean Jacques ran away from the Hospice at some date after June 13th, but that hunger obliged him to apply once more to the Institution which had sheltered and converted him. "It is unlikely that a newly-converted Protestant would find a situation without a direct recommendation from the mission on which he was dependent" (p. 125). He may, therefore, have received from the Spirito Santo a reference which enabled him to enter the household of Mme. de Vercellis (ibid., p. 125).

M. Ritter has just summarised the arguments for supposing that Rousseau did spend over two months in the Hospice. (Article quoted, *Annales*, XVII, 193–5.)

Chapter VII.

TURIN, 1728–9

FREED from the Hospice towards the middle or end of June,[1] Jean Jacques began joyfully to explore the city. "I had just . . . been shut up for over two months," he tells us, "and the first feeling I enjoyed was that of recovered liberty."[2] For one sou a night he obtained a poor bed in a lodging-house kept by a soldier's wife. All slept in the same room, mother, children and lodgers. "She was a good woman, swearing like a carter, loosely-dressed and dishevelled, but gentle-hearted. . . ." The five lire did not last long, and Jean Jacques was soon without resources. He wandered through the city, working here and there as an engraver. He initiated a romance with a pretty shopkeeper and was shown to the door by her husband. Every morning at eleven, he attended Mass in the Royal Chapel and took a keen pleasure in the musical service—for his conversion, if only skin-deep, was sincere. The love of music, too, was beginning to awaken within him, and where better could he cultivate it than on this soil of Italy? Piedmont was famous for its musicians, and the King of Sardinia had the best orchestra in Europe.

In the month of August, the soldier's wife, seconded no doubt with a reference from the Hospice, found Rousseau a place in the household of the Comtesse de Vercellis, widow of a Piedmontese nobleman. Madame de Vercellis was a woman of distinction by her culture and still more by her character. She had a large correspondence in French, a language which she handled with considerable grace and charm; and Rousseau's apprenticeship with Ducommun having given him an excellent hand, he was employed to write under her dictation. The Countess was a victim of cancer, and Jean Jacques witnessed her last illness:—

> This poor woman's sufferings wrung my heart (he says); the constancy with which she endured them gave me the

[1] L. J. Courtois (*Chronologie*, 11) follows the view of Ritter and Benedetto on this point. [2] *Confessions*, II.

> deepest respect and affection for her; and many and sincere were the tears I shed in her room without her or anyone perceiving it.
>
> We lost her at length. I saw her expire. Her life had been that of a woman of wit and sense; her death was that of a sage. I can say that she made the Catholic religion amiable to me by the serenity of soul with which she fulfilled its duties without negligence or affectation.

Madame de Vercellis had recently engaged as cook a young Savoyarde named Marion—a girl of excellent disposition and irreproachable honesty. After the Countess's death the heirs made an inventory of her effects, and only a small ribbon, pink and silver, was missing. It was found on Rousseau; Rousseau said that Marion had given it him. He said it because he was in an *impasse*; he liked Marion, and she was the first person who came into his mind. It was the fear of shame that made a coward of him. Confronted by her accuser, the girl denied the charge and begged him not to ruin her. He persisted in his assertion.

The household had been assembled and Madame de Vercellis's nephew, the Comte de la Roque, was there. The presence of all these people intimidated Rousseau and increased his terror. If the Count had taken him privately apart, he would probably have confessed everything.[1]

Unable to discover the culprit, the Count dismissed both Jean Jacques and Marion, remarking shrewdly that the conscience of the guilty one would avenge the innocent. His prediction was very amply fulfilled.[2] As to Marion, it is unlikely that a girl of her character would have been ruined.

[1] "This lie," he wrote nearly fifty years afterwards, "was only a result of false shame." (*Rêveries*, 4th Promenade.)

[2] See *Confessions*, II; *Emile*, IV; *Rêveries*, 4th Promenade. "Men speak of the cry of remorse which punishes hidden crimes in secret and so often brings them to light. Alas! who of us never heard that importunate voice?" (*Emile*, *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*.) Jean Jacques was still thinking of it in the year before his death (1777). "The criminal lie of which poor Marion was victim has left me with ineffaceable remorse, which has preserved me during the rest of my life, not only from every lie of this kind, but from all those which, in any possible way, might touch the interest and reputation of others." (*Rêveries*, 4th Promenade.)

The story of Marion is only known to us through Rousseau's avowal in the *Confessions* and the *Rêveries*.

The Count subsequently helped Rousseau to secure another situation, and it is reasonable to suppose that he did as much for Marion. We do not, however, know that he did, and in any case it does not affect the morality of the affair.

* * *

Jean Jacques had returned to his former lodgings. During the five or six weeks of idleness that followed, he was troubled by the symptoms of nervous disquiet which had already shown themselves in Geneva. The activity of his senses began to torment him, and with no knowledge of sex he had recourse to the ridiculous expedients revealed in the *Confessions*,[1] perhaps because his experience in the hospice had turned his thoughts, if unwillingly, into this channel. Poverty and hunger at last made themselves felt. But the tendency to vice was checked by the influence of a young priest, whose acquaintance he had made through Madame de Vercellis: the abbé Jean Claude Gaime.[2] The abbé Gaime had taken a liking for the homeless boy, and become for the time his philosopher and friend. Jean Jacques' ideas of life had been acquired in great part from the romantic novels of the seventeenth century: M. Gaime gave him a truer, if less glowing, picture. "He showed him how, under adverse fortunes, the wise man may always tend to happiness . . . ; how there is no true happiness without wisdom, and how wisdom belongs to every walk of life. . . . He told him . . . that if every man could read in the hearts of all the others, there would be more people wishing to go down in the world than to go up."[3]

Early one morning they climbed together to the top of the *Monte*, a hill near Turin, and across the level valley of the Po watched the sunrise on the Alps. The scene afforded a

[1] Book III.

[2] The abbé Gaime (1692–1761) was an M.A. of the University of Turin, and tutor to the Comte de Mellarède's children. Subsequently Professor in the Royal Academy, he spent the last fifteen years of his life as priest of a little village in Savoy. He was the child of a Savoyard peasant. See Masson, I, 56–7.

[3] *Confessions*, III.

text for the abbé,[1] and his discourse was not of uncertain dogmas, but of the principles of Natural Religion which do not require the sanction of an infallible Church or an infallible Book. Finally, unlike the zealous Pontverre, he advised Jean Jacques to return to his native city. His lessons were, in the boy's heart, "a seed of virtue and religion which was never stifled." True, they had little effect for the time; but they supplemented the pastor Lambercier's teaching,[2] and they enabled Jean Jacques' inner beliefs to pursue a harmonious development.

* * *

About the middle of December,[3] through the good offices of Madame de Vercellis's nephew, Jean Jacques entered the household of the Comte de Gouvon, head of the house of Solar and first Esquire of the Queen.[4] His duties were light. One day, when he was waiting at table, the company were discussing the Solars' device: *Tel fiert qui ne frappe pas.* They connected *fiert* with *fier* and supposed it to mean "threatens." When Jean Jacques, all agog with eagerness, was invited to speak, he explained that it was an old French word and came from the Latin *ferit*, "he strikes." The device meant: *Tel frappe qui ne tue pas.*

Jean Jacques acted as secretary and copyist to the young abbé de Gouvon. Every morning the abbé had Rousseau in his study and gave him lessons in Latin and Italian—a language which he had studied in the University

[1] *Emile*, IV (Introduction to the *Profession de foi*).—The story of the young Calvinist and the liberal-minded priest in the *Emile*, from the point of view of a historical document, is to be treated with even more caution than the narrative of the *Confessions*. And the *Profession of Faith*, needless to say, represents the creed of Rousseau, that is, of an advanced Protestant, and not necessarily of the abbé Gaime, who would have been much embarrassed if he had lived long enough to hear that he was one of the originals of the "Savoyard curate."

[2] See Masson, I, 60. "La doctrine de M. Gaime n'avait pas, on l'a vu, une couleur proprement romaine: en mettant l'accent principal de ses discours sur les devoirs de l'homme, il continuait plutôt M. Lambercier et les pasteurs de Genève."

[3] Courtois, *Chronologie*, p. 12.

[4] Living with the old count were his younger son, the abbé de Gouvon, his daughter-in-law, the Marquise de Broglio; his grand-daughter, Mlle. de Broglio; and his grandson, the Comte de Favria.

of Siena. To him Rousseau owed the beginnings of a literary taste and a knowledge of "Italian in its purity." Nor had the abbé Gaime forgotten him. He knew that the influence of a good book was worth a hundred taboos, and gave Rousseau passages to copy. The Solars were ambitious and already associated with the diplomatic service, the Marquis de Broglio being ambassador in Vienna. They had seen promise in Jean Jacques: he had, besides, all his father's lovability. Their intention was probably to train him as their secretary. To "make" a young man's fortune was a generous design, and flattering to this noble house; and the vista which now opened before Jean Jacques did not exclude the most brilliant prospects.

With inconceivable levity he thrust away the hand that was held out to him.

The abbé Gaime had advised him at the outset not to create a reputation that he would be unable or disinclined to keep up. His fears were justified. After about five months Jean Jacques' ardour wore off; the instability and wanderlust[1] of the Rousseaus reappeared. The present cause of unrest was the thought of Madame de Warens with whom he had been corresponding. It was also, and far more, his meeting with certain compatriots in Turin, his cousin Robert Mussard, and especially his old shop-mate Bâcle.[2] Bâcle was a comical fellow whose sallies enchanted Jean Jacques. He became infatuated with Bâcle. He ceased to go to the abbé for his lessons, and was frequently away from the house. He pushed his masters' patience to its limits and they were obliged at length to dismiss him.

The weather was good, it was early summer,[3] and he and Bâcle started gleefully to cross the mountains to Annecy. They had a fountain of Hiero, a mechanical marvel which the abbé had given Jean Jacques, and they imagined that

[1] For this side of Rousseau's character, see Dr. E. Regis, *La dromomanie de J. J. Rousseau* in *La Chronique médicale*, XVII (1910), 129–38.
[2] May, 1729.
[3] I adopt here the chronology given by Courtois, pp. 12–13 (p. 12, note 8). Rousseau must have spent at least five months with the Comte de Gouvon in order to learn Italian as well as he did. And it is unlikely that the two Genevese crossed Mont Cenis before the melting of the winter snows.

when they made it play at the inn or in the village street, the delighted country-folk would provide them with food and shelter! This fantastic journey across the Alps was almost as enjoyable as Rousseau had anticipated, although the fountain produced only a mediocre sensation. It broke very opportunely when they were beginning to tire of it. At Annecy, Jean Jacques took leave of Bâcle, of whom he had also had enough, and reappeared at the house of Madame de Warens.[1]

The year spent in Italy had not been altogether wasted. It had widened his horizon and removed his prejudices. A woman like Madame de Vercellis, men like the abbé de Gouvon and the abbé Gaime, had taught him that Calvinism was not the only religion able to produce high types of character. And then he had been extraordinarily well treated. The man of the north too often thinks of Italy in terms of architecture and painting: he studies its art before he troubles to study its people. Rousseau tells us nothing about the art of Italy (except its music), but he tells us a great deal about the people, which is what many of us prefer to know.

[1] End of June, 1729, and *not* 1731 as Rousseau supposes in the *Confessions*.

Chapter VIII.

INTERLUDE: THE EARLY LIFE OF MADAME DE WARENS[1]

MADAME DE WARENS had been, until recently, Swiss and Protestant like Rousseau; it was only three years before, in 1726, that she had abandoned her country and religion. The career of this extraordinary woman can hardly be separated from that of her more extraordinary protégé. She was destined to play so important a rôle in his life for the next twelve years, and to occupy to the very end such a place in his thoughts, that some account of her life and character may be regarded as part of Jean Jacques' biography. During their years of intimacy, she was careful to present her early life and conversion in a favourable light; and when the philosopher came to write his *Confessions*, he in good faith painted a picture of her which is in many respects inaccurate.

Françoise Louise de la Tour was the daughter of Jean Baptiste de la Tour, a nobleman of Chailly, near Montreux. She was born at Vevey on the 31st of March, 1699. Her great misfortune—which excuses much in her later life—was to lose her mother while she was still an infant and her father when she was only eleven years of age.[2] Her childhood was spent at Le Basset, among the vineyards of Clarens. The old house with its covered balcony commanded a lovely view over the Lake of Geneva, the mountains of Savoy and

[1] This chapter appeared, in slightly different form, in the *French Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 2, June, 1928.

[2] Albert de Montet, *Madame de Warens et le pays de Vaud* (*Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse romande*, 2e Série, Vol. III, Lausanne, 1891), pp. 1–18. This study has been supplemented by the researches of M. Eugène Ritter and Signor Benedetto: it remains, nevertheless, the standard work on Madame de Warens's early life.

the Dent du Midi. Inland, one could see the Castle of Blonay; and below, the tower of St. Martin's of Vevey appeared above an undulation of the hillside.[1] Here Françoise Louise was brought up by her two aunts, whose affection expressed itself in indulgence rather than in lessons of self-restraint. On her father's death (1710) she went to live for two years with her step-mother and was then sent to Lausanne to be educated at a pension.[2]

In 1713 she married a young nobleman named Sébastien Isaac de Loys, and settled in Vevey. M. de Loys was twenty-five at this time. He had fought in the Swedish Army against Russia, and was now a Captain in the service of Berne. A good business-man, of orderly habits and sound judgment, he became a member, during the years that followed, of various public bodies in Vevey and Lausanne.[3] It was he who completed his wife's education, giving her a taste for literary culture and particularly for the advanced and ingenious writings of Bayle and Saint-Evremond.[4] The name by which his wife is generally known was adopted in 1723, when he acquired the lordship of Vuarrens, which the Bernese spelled Warens.

Of the married life of the young people very little is recorded. The author of the *Confessions* ascribes to his patroness a good heart, but an intelligence which had been misled and corrupted by a certain M. de Tavel. Colonel Etienne Sigismond de Tavel was a friend of M. de Warens. According to Jean Jacques, he seduced Madame de Warens by his sophistries, detaching her from her previous fidelity. Some colour is lent to this supposition by the fact that she does appear to have regarded external actions as a matter of indifference,[5] provided that the heart was right and that

[1] M. de Montet, who knew this old house before it was demolished in 1889, has described the view in detail (*op. cit.*, 13–14.) Two photographs of the house form the frontispiece.

[2] De Montet, 22–23.

[3] Ibid., 28, 23–24, 49.

[4] See Benedetto, *Madame de Warens d'après des documents nouveaux*, p. 8.

[5] Thus she writes in a letter to François Magny: "Je fais les choses avec une indifférence qui me surprend quelquefois. . . ." See E. Ritter, *La famille et la jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, 2nd ed., p. 208.

those actions caused no harm or suffering to others[1]; and it may be that she owed this doctrine to M. de Tavel. But whether M. de Tavel became her lover is another matter. Rousseau's assertion may have rested only on hearsay: there is no evidence in confirmation, and the probability is against it.[2] Vevey was a Puritan town. The high regard in which Madame de Warens was held, up to the time of her flight, makes it improbable that there was any stain on her character.[3]

The marriage appears to have been a success for some years, and M. de Warens[4] to have been sincerely attached to his wife. The latter, in a legal document, testifies to the good relations in which she had lived with her husband. Her subsequent desertion of him was probably due to factors which Rousseau does not mention.

Neither her aunts nor her step-mother had succeeded in giving Mademoiselle de la Tour any real taste for domestic work. She was one of those persons who, with many good natural qualities, think mainly of the pursuit of happiness[5]; who place happiness in the next county or next week, among other friends or in another walk of life. Her ambition was to entertain lavishly, to be the centre of admiration, to shine among the hostesses of Vevey. More brilliant and mercurial than her fellows, she could not tolerate the prosaic side of life. Vanity formed the guiding principle of her nature. She gave Rousseau to understand that she was a member of the distinguished family of La Tour de Peilz, a family which had in fact become extinct. She not only called herself Baroness, but also Countess de Warens, and daughter of Jean Baptiste de la Tour, Baron of the Empire.[6] And yet this woman, who failed in two of the first duties of

[1] ". . . . il l'attaqua par des sophismes, et parvint à lui montrer la fidélité conjugale comme une apparence obligatoire dont toute la moralité regardait l'opinion; le repos des maris comme la seule règle du devoir des femmes. . . ." (*Confessions*, Book VI.)

[2] De Montet, 52. [3] Ibid., 46.

[4] The name is used here for the sake of clearness. He bore it only between 1723 and 1728, after which he resumed the name of De Loys.

[5] I do not mean the aspiration to happiness found in noble types of character like Madame de Staël.

[6] De Montet, 10, and Note 2.

life, possessed some of the greatest virtues: kindness of heart, freedom from vindictiveness, and real generosity. She won the esteem of her fellow-citizens on account of her liberality to the poor and to the French Huguenots who had taken refuge in Vevey; and this esteem was expressed more than once by the Municipal Council.[1] One judges that her marriage would have continued to be successful, if she had had children and if her loyalty to the National Church had not been undermined.

* * *

A frequent visitor at Le Basset during her childhood had been François Magny, secretary to the Council of Vevey. It was through him that she had come under the influence of Pietism.

This Revivalist movement had originated in Lutheran Germany, and was now making progress in the Cantons of Zurich and Berne.[2] Its sectaries regarded religion as essentially an affair of the heart and the inner life, and truth as revealed mystically to the believer. Reason, in their view, was only an uncertain guide. While holding meetings for singing and discussion, they attached no importance to external ceremonies or even to the sect to which one belonged.[3] Inspiration and piety were their only concern[4]; and they blamed the Reformers for having brought about a schism in Christendom. "On the 13th day of the same month of January, 1710," wrote Johann Tennhard in his mystical vein, "it was given to me to know that Doctor Martin Luther would have done far better to keep for himself the knowledge which God had given him at the beginning than to undertake to build up a new sect, since many fewer are saved than if they had remained in Popery and devoted themselves to leading a Christian life. . . . The only result has been war and disunion in several countries; and even

[1] De Montet, 44–46 and Document 23 (p. 156).

[2] Ritter, *Magny et le Piétisme romand* (*Mémoires et Documents publiés par la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse romande*, 2e Série, Vol. III, 1891), p. 257.

[3] Ibid., *La famille et la jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, ed. 1926, 199–200.

[4] "La piété était le premier intérêt de leur vie," says M. Ritter (*Magny et le Piétisme romand*, p. 257).

to-day they do nought but insult and accuse one another of heresy. Moreover, none of these religions is one whit better than another; but all these sects live in the same impiety."[1]

Magny had translated into French the book in which this passage occurs; and he seems to have shared the general attitude of the Pietists, who were by no means ill-disposed towards Catholicism.[2]

Their activities did not pass unobserved. More than once Magny himself had been examined or cautioned by the Consistory of Vevey. The authorities knew him for a man of the highest character, if a visionary, and treated him with consideration; but he was forbidden to write on religious matters. And when he published the translation of Tennhard, the book created a commotion so serious that he left the country and resided for seven years in Geneva under the protection of influential friends.[3]

Now Madame de Warens's father and aunts had been Pietists, and so were many of the families which she frequented[4]; she herself had for long been a disciple and intimate of Magny. In her way, she was deeply religious—of this there is no doubt—but Magny's lessons, which would have been harmless to a woman of solid principles, insensibly disaffected her from the Calvinist Church in which she had been born, and thus made it easier for her to desert her husband and country.

* * *

After passing six years in Lausanne (1718–24), Madame de Warens and her husband came back to Vevey in 1724. Here she found the aged Magny, who had been permitted to return; but Magny's mysticism only sufficed to occupy a part of her thoughts. To gratify her ambition, she needed more money than her present resources could supply, and in 1725 she went into partnership with a young Frenchman

[1] *Suite des Paroles de Dieu, continuation de l'histoire de ma vie*, 238. Translated into French by F. Magny. In-4, 800 pp., 1712.—Quoted by Ritter in *Magny et le Piétisme romand*, 257.

[2] Ritter, *Magny et le Piétisme romand*, 311.

[3] Ibid, *La famille et la jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, 202–25.

[4] De Montet, 14.

to establish a factory for the manufacture of silk stockings; seeing in this enterprise the prospects of a speedy fortune. Her husband disliked the scheme, but he gave her the use of a building, furnished some capital and raised further sums on loan. The Frenchman, who was manager, was to provide the technical knowledge. The factory, however, was on too ambitious a scale, and Madame de Warens had no aptitude for business. She proceeded to draw from the Company's funds, themselves largely borrowed, for her private expenses! The manager followed her example; and the Company's affairs were soon going from bad to worse.[1] What wonder if, before long, Madame de Warens became indisposed? She was subject to the fashionable malady of the "vapours,"[2] or neurasthenia, and in the autumn of this year went to take the waters at Aix-les-Bains. Here she met relatives of her husband, M. and Madame de Bonnevaux, who had remained Romanists and who now probably took occasion to extol the superior merits of Savoy and Catholicism over Protestant Switzerland.[3] She visited the relics of St. François de Sales and listened to sermons from the Bishop of Annecy. Finally she attended a Court-reception at Chambéry, and came away dazzled by what she had seen and also, perhaps, by an inclination to transfer her destinies to this charming land. Passing through Geneva on her way home, she told her friends there "how delighted she was with Savoy and how disgusted" with her own country.[4] Thus rapidly was the dream of a fortune to be gained in business supplanted by that of a place among the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen of Sardinia!

[1] De Montet, 57–62.

[2] Letter from M. de Loys to M. de Middes (London, 3rd October, 1732), printed by De Montet in *Madame de Warens et le Pays de Vaud*, Document 61, pp. 203–41. This long letter is our principal source for the events connected with Madame de Warens's flight and conversion.

[3] "Nota bene" (writes M. de Loys), "que la ditte dame de Bonnevaux a été une des principales entremetteuses dans cette affaire et qu'elle se met sur le pied de convertisseuse. Quand le diable fut vieux, il se fit hermite" (Ibid., 231).

[4] "Elle ne put s'empêcher de leur témoigner combien elle était charmée de la Savoye et dégoûtée de notre pays. Des gens d'honneur m'ont assuré ce fait" (Ibid., 226).

On her return to Vevey, she dismissed her manager and got M. de Warens to raise another loan on her behalf. But the business was soon in such a parlous condition that a reckoning could not long be delayed. It is unlikely that she would have been ruined, if she had had the courage to face her creditors now[1]; but her nerves got the upper hand. Faced with the duty of revealing everything to her husband and of meeting her obligations, she resorted to the plan which had already suggested itself. Once in Savoy and converted, she would make a fresh start in life; and across the tangle of perplexities and vexations in which she had involved herself, she pictured the brilliant future that awaited her at the Court.

There was one serious question to face. In the *Pays de Vaud* the enjoyment of civil rights was bound up with membership of the State Church—Calvinist, as in Geneva; in the dominions of the King of Sardinia, only a Catholic could hope for advancement. But what would have been an obstacle for others presented no difficulty to the disciple of Magny. The old Pietist could not, of course, foresee the very mercenary conversion which his teaching would facilitate; and when he heard of that conversion, he remained friendly and sympathetic.

Madame de Warens in the meantime had been preparing her *coup de théâtre*. She had induced Dr Viridet, of Morges, to prescribe for her the waters of Amphion, at Evian.[2] And as early as the 25th of March, 1726, Claude Anet, a servant in her confidence, had procured at Montreux a copy of his certificate of baptism[3]—probably with a view to emigration. The evidence, in fact, points to the supposition that her flight had been meditated some months in advance.[4]

Everything favoured her design. As a result of heavy rains in early July, the Veveyse had overflowed, causing considerable damage. While M. de Warens was superintending the repairs, which kept him busy for the rest of

[1] Benedetto, 79–80. [2] Letter of M. de Loys. See De Montet, 226.
[3] "Ce que les paysans ne faisaient guère que lorsqu'ils voulaient quitter le pays" (De Montet, 75).
[4] Cf. Benedetto, 58–59.

the month, his wife packed in her trunks—in addition to her jewels and personal effects—the finest linen of the household, the silver, various services of porcelain, and ornaments, and even a mattress and a swan-down coverlet: finally, she took the money that was in the till at the factory. As she always needed a quantity of luggage for the smallest journey, and as it had been arranged that she should go to Evian for some weeks, her preparations in this case aroused no suspicion.

On the 13th of July, the King of Sardinia arrived at Evian; the same day, as chance would have it, M. de Warens was invited to dinner with the Bernese delegate. While he was away from the house, his wife had her trunks and packages carried down to the brigantine. And at 2 a.m. next morning, the 14th of July, she took a hasty leave of her husband, who accompanied her to the boat, unaware that she intended to cross the lake for more than a few weeks' cure.[1]

Reaching the little Savoyard town in a few hours, Madame de Warens contrived an edifying scene of penitence and conversion. The King was going to Mass with Mgr de Bernex and certain gentlemen of the Court. As they entered the church, the fugitive seized the Bishop's robe and flinging herself at his feet, exclaimed with tears in her eyes: "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum." The Bishop sent her to his lodgings, where, after Mass, he had a long conference with her.[2] Such saints as Mgr de Bernex are peculiarly liable to deception by a clever adventuress. Madame de Warens led him to believe that she had been converted by a miraculous revelation of divine truth, assisted by his own eloquence in the pulpit! To bring back heretics into the fold was one of the Bishop's principal aims

[1] The circumstances of her flight are described in detail in the letter of M. de Loys to M. de Middes (De Montet, 226–9).

[2] See *Notice de M. de Conzié des Charmettes sur Mme. de Warens et J. J. Rousseau*, published by C. Guillermin in *Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société savoisienne d'histoire et d'archéologie*, tome I, 1ère série. De Conzié was an eye-witness of the episode in the Church, and his testimony is therefore more trustworthy than that of Rousseau, who only heard about it. See De Montet, 71 and Benedetto, 61.

in life; and the present instance was too flattering for him to be sceptical as to motives. He was also impressed by the greatness of what Madame de Warens was sacrificing. Her apologists represent her, before this decisive step, as living "in the midst of abundance and pleasure," but after it, as laying down "at the foot of the Cross . . . the glitter and enjoyments of the world and renouncing them for ever."[1] Rousseau declared that she "had abandoned great possessions and a brilliant rank in the country, in order to follow the voice of the Lord."[2] The Bishop himself was so grossly deceived by what was regarded as a notable miracle in his career that some years after the event, he wrote of her: "Madame Louise Françoise de la Tour, Baroness de Warens, who to practise the Gospel has left her family, her ample possessions and all that was most dear to her in the world, to embrace our holy religion, to the edification of the whole diocese. . . ."[3] The Swiss who happened to be at Evian in July, 1726, were nearer the truth when they said that the real "motive of the Baroness's flight was the disorder she had put into her husband's affairs . . . by rash prodigality."[4]

Her conversion, in short, was not in contradiction with her religious feelings; but it fitted in very well with her worldly fears and worldly ambitions.

M. de Warens, in the meantime, was ignorant of what was really taking place. For over a fortnight he was so occupied with his duties in Vevey, that it was impossible to visit his wife, although he received cordial letters from Evian. On the 4th of August, however, he crossed in the brigantine and spent most of the day with her. She asked him to send on to her Bayle's *Dictionary*, which it amused her to read, and a certain cane with golden pommel. Towards evening she showed signs of trouble, sighing and exclaiming from time to time: "My dear husband, what will become of you?" M. de Warens failed to understand this expression of remorse,

[1] See Boudet, *Vie de Mgr. de Rossillon de Bernex, évêque et prince de Genève*, Paris, 1751, II, 115 et seq., and Benedetto, 53, 54, 56.
[2] In the memoir which he drew up for Boudet in 1742 (De Montet, 10).
[3] Quoted by Benedetto, 62.
[4] De Conzié, *op. cit.* (See De Montet, 75.)

taking it only for a sign of "vapours." But at nightfall, when the boat was about to put off and she took leave of him at the lake-side, he noticed a few of the King's Guards standing near. It did not occur to him at the time that they were there to prevent any attempt at rescue or abduction.[1]

Reaching Vevey the next day, he dispatched the cane and Bayle: it was not until the 7th of August that he heard his wife had deserted him and had left Evian.[2]

Arrived at Annecy, Madame de Warens entered the convent of the Visitation (8th of August), and after further instruction from the Bishop abjured the Protestant faith (8th of September). In response to two letters, her husband came over to see her on the 24th of September. According to his accounts of the interview, her tears and confusion, added to the ascendancy which she had always had over his feelings, touched and partly disarmed him. He remonstrated with her for abandoning her religion so lightly and entering a Church whose dogmas "were so filled with absurdities, fables and gross errors that it was impossible she believed them in good faith." Finally, he pointed out that even if she had seriously determined on this change, the manner in which she had effected it could not fail to prejudice her, even in the minds of her friends, and that it was unpardonable "to desert a husband of whom she had never had reason to complain." Madame de Warens (he continues) did not excuse her change on grounds of conscience, but "displayed so much indifference in this matter" that he was struck by it. She told him "that the disorder in their affairs had partly impelled her to take this step"; that she had been flattered by the honours received at the Court; and that knowing her husband to be very tolerant, she had believed she would be able to persuade him to follow her example, in which case he would be given a place that would fully compensate him for what he would abandon. M. de Warens replied that she had not learned to know him

[1] Letter from M. de Loys to M. de Middes (De Montet, 230–1).
[2] Ibid., 233.

during the twelve years they had lived together, if she could make such a proposal.

On the 26th of September, Madame de Warens signed a contract making over most of the property to him. In it she declares "that she has not left her house or the territories of their Excellencies of Berne owing to any displeasure received from him or from others, but simply to follow the movements of her conscience, . . . that her intention has always been to leave [her husband] in peaceable enjoyment and possession [of all her goods] in which she counted on his not being troubled, having always lived in peace and union with her said husband and desiring to give him marks of her good-will and of the friendship which she has for him, for the gracious manners which he has shown her. She thus makes to the aforesaid noble Sébastien Isaac de Loys a general donation of all her goods and rights, reserving only the sum of a thousand livres of Savoy, to be taken out of the goods above mentioned . . . very humbly beseeching their Excellencies [the Bernese Government] . . . to ratify the present donation . . . which she has made to her said husband as a proof of the friendship which she will preserve for him throughout her life. . . ."[1]

This document, signed by Madame de Warens, goes far towards vindicating her husband's character and his part in the events described. It appears, however, that he made her a promise of an annual allowance of 300 livres, and that this was not carried out. Nor must it be forgotten that she had brought him, in the first instance, a dowry of 30,000 livres. As was usual in such cases, the Bernese Government confiscated the property in question; and on the 26th of December, they put M. de Warens in possession. The following February, the Supreme Consistory pronounced his divorce. The sale of the property had produced 31,154 livres; and in the winding up of the Estate, over 30,000 were set aside in payment of debts. But M. de Warens had had the presence of mind to make a personal claim under this

[1] Published by A. Metzger in *La Conversion de Madame de Warens*, Geneva, 1886, 45–60. Quoted by De Montet, 214–5.

head, and he received over 16,000 livres.[1] As he had raised two loans on behalf of his wife and was moreover the injured party, the sum cannot be regarded as excessive.

Meanwhile, in 1726, Madame de Warens had written from the convent to Magny in the following terms:—

"I do not doubt that I owe my conversion to the . . . prayers which you have offered up for me, with many other good Christian souls. God give me the favour of gathering their fruits."[2]

Magny later on came to see her at Annecy. He seems to have been satisfied with the result of his work; for when, after his return to Switzerland, he saw M. de Warens, he told him "that he had never found his wife's soul so turned towards God, and better disposed (en meilleures dispositions)"[3]: surely, a singular piece of news for a husband who had been deserted!

* * *

The King of Sardinia no doubt soon learned the essential facts of the case, and with this knowledge all Madame de Warens's chances of a career at the Court passed away.[4] Nor was this economical ruler the man to grant a pension of 1,500 livres a year,[5] without requiring some very definite services in return. Madame de Warens was, in fact, employed by the Government to assist in the conversion of "heretics," and also as a political agent and spy. Her duties were to collaborate in Mgr de Bernex's favourite mission; to receive any fugitive Protestants who might be sent to her, and either to pass them on to Turin or to complete their instruction and find them situations; if they came from Switzerland, she was to obtain from them, in one way or another, any information likely to interest the Sardinian Government. These duties fixed her in Savoy, except when she was sent on a secret service mission; she enjoyed less freedom now than when living with her husband; and when

[1] Benedetto, 86. [2] Quoted by Benedetto, 26.

[3] Letter from M. de Loys to M. de Middes (De Montet, 224).

[4] See Benedetto, 70.

[5] Benedetto remarks that a Senator of the *Cour des Comptes* did not receive as much (p. 76).

in 1730 she wanted to take a holiday, she was obliged to ask the King for three months' leave.[1]

Her adventure, which had promised so much at the outset, soon lost its glamour. In this situation, she might well reflect that so far from having attained the paradise she had imagined, her life in Vevey had really been happier. Even so, and in spite of her discreditable occupation, she might have lived in reasonable contentment. But for some time the thought of her conversion returned to fill her with doubt and remorse; and in the years that followed, her mania for industrial enterprises of a fantastic kind, and her financial incompetence, put her into the hands of moneylenders; while the regular payment of her salary, which was often pledged in advance, did not save her from the most cruel embarrassment.

[1] Benedetto, 77, 76.

Chapter IX.

THE RASH ESCAPADE OF MONSIEUR LE MAISTRE, 1729–30

SAVOY, with its shady valleys, its woods of spruce and pine, its still, deep lakes, was to be Jean Jacques' home for the next ten years.

When he reappeared at Annecy in the summer of 1729, Madame de Warens could hardly refuse him shelter. In sending him to Turin she had incurred a responsibility which it was hard to cast off; and she had corresponded with him while he was away. It was her business, after all, to look after new converts. Moreover, despite Jean Jacques' escapades in the capital, his friends there had not forgotten him, and M. Gaime had probably written to recommend him to the abbé Léonard, who was chaplain to Mgr de Bernex.[1] The abbé Léonard lived in Annecy and was, besides, a personal friend of Madame de Warens.

Between Rousseau and his protectress the simplest and most affectionate relationship sprang up at once. "Maman"[2] he called her: she called him "Petit," and "Maman" and "Petit" they remained for each other. The house stood by the canal, near the town gates, and Jean Jacques' room looked out on to the open country. For some years he had lived in city streets, where only grey walls and chimneys met the eye: now for the first time since leaving Bossey, he could awake in the morning to gaze out with ecstasy on the green of trees and meadows.[3] The household included a gardener

[1] See François Mugnier, *Madame de Warens et J. J. Rousseau*, Paris, 1891, p. 56.

[2] "Maman" used to be applied by her dependents to the mistress of a household as a term of affectionate familiarity: it was therefore quite appropriate in the present instance.

[3] The famous passage: "C'était depuis Bossey la première fois que j'avais du vert devant mes fenêtres" (*Confessions*, III), though it strikes a familiar chord for modern hearts, was something original in eighteenth century France. With it, a new sensibility appeared in French literature.

ANNECY.
"The house stood by the canal, near the town gates" (Ch. IX).
The Canal du Thiou, near the site of Madame de Warens's house.

and a cook, the lady's maid, Anne Marie Merceret, who came from Salins in Franche-Comté,[1] and Claude Anet the steward, a young Swiss of twenty-three who had accompanied Madame de Warens in her flight and abjured his religion about the same time. Anet was a man of serious and business-like character; and if for some years his mistress's affairs remained in comparative order, it was through his prudent and economical management.

One of Madame de Warens's relatives, M. Bernard d'Aubonne, who had been Lord of Morges where he had quarrelled with the magistrates as well as with their Excellencies of Berne, happened to arrive at this time and was consulted regarding Jean Jacques' future. He made friends with the boy and observed him without the latter's being aware of it; but his report was discouraging. Rousseau was, in his opinion, "if not altogether inept, at any rate, a boy of little wit, without ideas, almost without knowledge, in a word, very limited in all respects . . . the honour of one day becoming a village priest was (says Rousseau) the highest fortune to which I could aspire."[2] In August, accordingly, he was sent to be trained in the Seminary of the Lazarists, the expenses being paid by the Bishop.[3] The prospect of a career in the Church appealed to him, and the Seminary was the more attractive because its Superior, Father Gros, was a human, likeable sort of man. He occasionally visited Madame de Warens, who used to tease him, and, in the absence of her maid, even get him to lace her. While this task was being performed, she would run about the room with the old priest trotting after her and exclaiming: "Really, Madam, do keep still."[4]

Rousseau's first master in the Seminary filled him with horror and dismay:—

> He had a face like gingerbread, the voice of an ox, the glance of a screech-owl, and wild-boar's bristles in place of a beard. . . . his limbs played like the pulleys of a

[1] Her father was at this time organist to the Collegiate Church of Notre-Dame in Annecy.

[2] *Confessions*, III. [3] Mugnier, p. 57. [4] *Confessions*, III.

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> mannikin . . . I still fancy myself meeting him in the corridors and can see him graciously holding out his filthy square bonnet to sign me to enter his room, more frightful to me than a dungeon.[1]

Happily for Jean Jacques, Father Gros transferred him to another supervisor, M. Gâtier, who had not yet completed his own studies. He was a fair-haired young man, with something melancholy and romantic about him, which completely won Jean Jacques' heart. But the boy displayed no aptitude at all for the vocation in view. Since he had left M. Lambercier, the absence of intellectual discipline had unfitted him for this kind of work, and even M. Gâtier's lessons failed to make a scholar of him. After two months' trial, Father Gros sent him back to Madame de Warens—a failure.

A week or two before this, he had witnessed a singular episode at her home. It was a Sunday, and both he and Mgr de Bernex were paying her a visit when the adjoining house was seen to be in flames. As the wind was blowing from the direction of this building towards Madame de Warens's house, the danger was imminent. The Bishop quietly took Madame de Warens into the garden, and together with those present, went down on his knees and offered up prayers for the house's safety. While he was praying, the flames had indeed begun to lick round the building and even enter the windows, when suddenly the wind changed and they were carried away in the opposite direction. Rousseau was enormously impressed; and some years later,[2] when the monks were gathering material with a view to the good bishop's beatification, he wrote a solemn statement of what he had seen and described it as a miracle.

He had been in no way alienated by his experience in the Seminary. "I became a Catholic," he afterwards wrote of this period of his life, "but I still remained a Christian; and soon, by habit, my heart grew sincerely attached to my new religion. The instructions, the examples of Madame de Warens fortified me in this attachment."[3] It was proof of

[1] *Confessions*, III. [2] 1736 or 1737. See Mugnier, 60–1.
[3] *Rêveries*, 3e Promenade.

his fidelity that he desired still, if he could not be a priest, at any rate to be closely connected with the Church. He possessed a good voice and had evinced some taste for music; so he readily fell in with a proposal that he should go to live with M. Nicolas Le Maistre,[1] the choirmaster, and be trained to sing in the Cathedral choir. There were five other boys in the choir-school, of ages ranging from nine to seventeen,[2] and Jean Jacques was the eldest. The six months he spent there were a time of real happiness and the smallest circumstances of his life became invested with an unfading charm:—

> Not only (he writes) do I recall times, places and persons, but all surrounding objects, the temperature of the air, its odour and colour, a certain local impression which only made itself felt there and whose lively memory takes me back there once more. For example, everything that was repeated at the choir-master's house, everything we sang in the choir . . . the fine, noble robes of the canons, the priests' chasubles, the choristers' mitres, the faces of the musicians, a lame old carpenter who used to play the double-bass, a little blond abbé who played the violin, the rag of a cassock which, after laying aside his sword, M. Le Maître would put on above his lay clothes, and the fine white surplice with which he covered its tatters, to go into the choir; the pride with which I would go with my little flute to take my place in the choir-stall for a short recitative which M. Le Maître had composed expressly for me . . . everything, in the memories of this time of happiness and innocence, returns often to delight and sadden me.[3]

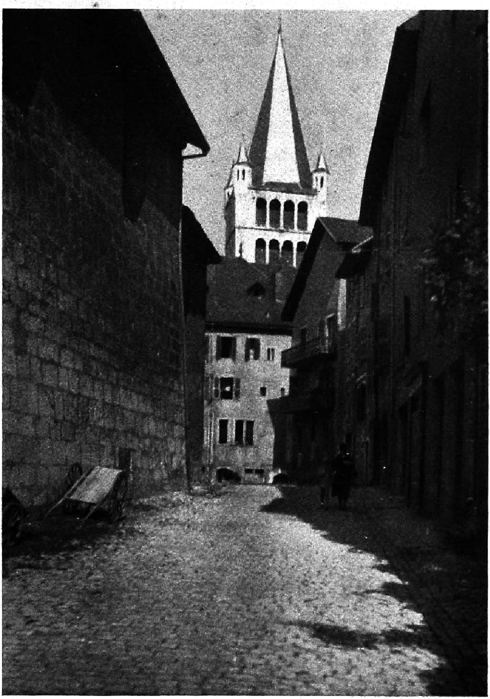
"One night in February (1730) when it was very cold," and Le Maistre and his pupils were all sitting round the fire, "we heard someone knock at the street-door. Perrine took her lantern, went down and opened. . . ." The stranger called himself Venture de Villeneuve: he was a French musician, forced to travel owing to "the poor state of his finances." Le Maistre invited him in and he at once made himself at home. He spoke easily of music and musicians, "he knew all the great virtuosos . . . all the actors and actresses"; but no sooner was the company engaged on a

[1] Jacques Louis Nicolas Le Maistre was a Parisian.
[2] See Mugnier, 61. [3] *Confessions*, III.

subject of conversation than he would make everyone laugh by some broad pleasantry. His first performance in the choir won him warm compliments from the canons and musicians; Le Maistre embraced him; Jean Jacques was completely captivated. Madame de Warens had to meet him; but this witty and plausible adventurer did not impose upon her, and she warned Jean Jacques against the peril of consorting with such a man.

The boy was soon to be involved, however, in an adventure of his master's. M. Le Maistre was a man of simple, genial disposition, fond of his music, but fond also of the bottle and subject to epileptic fits. He was so cheerful in normal times that Madame de Warens called him the "kitten." But he had not learned how to bear injustice in silence. The canons frequently adopted a haughty attitude towards him, and in particular the Precentor, M. de Vidomne de Saint-Ange, treated him in cavalier fashion. A quarrel broke out between them during Holy Week, and Le Maistre, who had had enough of these humiliations, decided to leave Annecy without warning, abandon his appointment and take his music with him. It was the eve of the Easter celebrations, a time when the choir-master's services would be most needed, and those who had insulted him would thus be left in the lurch.

This wild project was communicated to Madame de Warens, who endeavoured to dissuade Le Maistre but in the end agreed to help him; and Jean Jacques had no other course than to accompany the master to whom he was virtually apprenticed. As to Madame de Warens, she and her compatriot, M. d'Aubonne, were engaged in matters for which they had no need of Rousseau's assistance or of his presence at the house, and they therefore saw no objection to his leaving. The music, which formed a considerable bulk, was packed in a case and carried by Claude Anet, Rousseau and the gardener to the first village on the road to Lyons, where it was put on a pack-mule and dispatched to the frontier; and in the evening Jean Jacques and his master set off for Seyssel, the frontier-station.



Annecy: the Spire of Notre-Dame de Liesse. On the left, the wall of the Cathedral where Rousseau used to sing in the choir.

Here Le Maistre called on the priest, who was a Canon of Annecy, and told him that he was travelling to Belley, on the Bishop's request, to arrange the Easter music. The priest entertained them generously and they left in high spirits and with shouts of laughter at the success of their stratagem. At Belley they spent four or five days with the music-master, and then went on to Lyons.

Unfortunately, Le Maistre had been drinking too much during the last week or so; the epilepsy returned, and two days after reaching Lyons, when they were in the street near the hotel, he had a sudden seizure. Jean Jacques was terrified: he called for help and begged those who came running up to have Le Maistre carried to his hotel, which he named. Then, overcome with cowardice in face of this terrible affliction, he slipped away and abandoned his master.

After calling on Mademoiselle du Châtelet, a friend of Madame de Warens, he returned at once to Annecy to rejoin his protectress. What was his surprise, on arrival, to find that she was no longer there, having left somewhat mysteriously for Paris with M. d'Aubonne and Claude Anet.[1]

"It was then (writes Rousseau) that regret for having basely abandoned M. Le Maître began to make itself felt, and it was all the keener when I heard of the misfortune which had come upon him. His box of music, which contained his whole fortune," had been seized on its arrival by the instructions of Canon Dortan, to whom the chapter at Annecy had written, "and poor Le Maître thus lost the fruit of his talents, the work of his youth and the resource of his old age."[2]

[1] April, 1730.

[2] *Confessions*, IV.

Chapter X.

SUMMER IN ANNECY, 1730

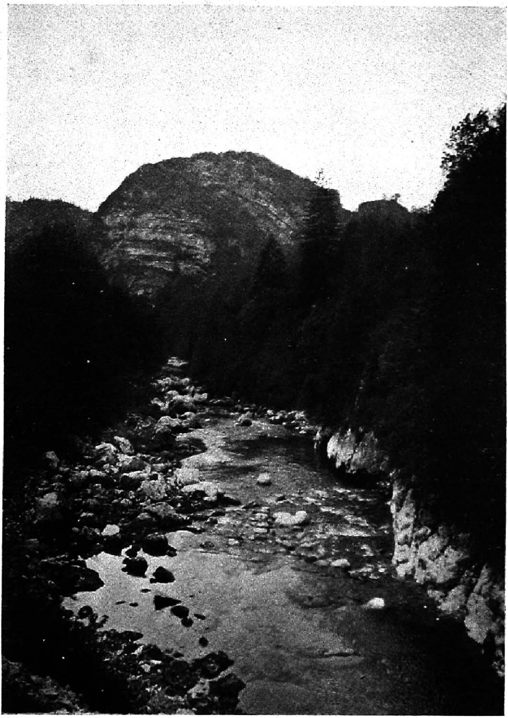
JEAN JACQUES could not stay at Madame de Warens's house, since the maid, Merceret, was there alone. He therefore shared the musician Venture's lodgings at a neighbouring cobbler's. But no doubt he frequently had a meal at the expense of Mademoiselle Merceret or of one of the dressmakers or shop-assistants whom she knew. There were a a number of Swiss girls in Annecy, recent converts to Catholicism and so within the circle of Madame de Warens's acquaintances. One of these was Mademoiselle Giraud, a Genevese who set her cap at Jean Jacques, persuaded Merceret to take him to see her and teased him unmercifully: for his part, he felt nothing for her but aversion. Another was Mademoiselle de Graffenried, a Bernese girl whom he had met occasionally at Madame de Warens's. She lived with Madame Galley, a widow of good family, and was companion to Claudine, the eldest daughter of the house.[1]

One morning[2]—it was about the 1st of July and "the dawn appeared lovelier than usual"—Jean Jacques got up early and set off at 4 a.m. with the idea of seeing the sun rise. He had just celebrated his eighteenth birthday, and he was in holiday mood. His way led through the Gorge of Saint-Clair and up the beautiful valley of the Fier.[3] The meadows were deep in grass and flowers, and nightingales were still singing in the woods that overhung the path. It was about 6.30. Jean Jacques was strolling by the bank of the Melèze, a little tributary torrent of the Fier, and warm, golden light was striking in through tree-trunks and foliage, when he

[1] See Mugnier, 72–3.

[2] For this episode, see *Confessions*, IV; Mugnier, 70–4; F. and J. Serand, *J. J. Rousseau en Savoie : l'idylle des cerises. Revue Savoisienne*, LIII (Annecy, 1912), 17–51. This article has been reprinted and forms a delightful little monograph, illustrated with engravings: *L'Idylle des Cerises*, Chambéry, 1928.

[3] Mugnier, 70–1; *L'Idylle des Cerises* (1928), p. 19.



"Savoy, with its shady valleys, its woods of spruce and pine" (Ch. IX).

The Gorge of Saint-Clair traversed by Rousseau during his walk to Thônes on July 1st, 1730 (Ch. X).

heard behind him the sound of horses' hoofs and the voices and laughter of two girls. As he turned round, someone called him; he retraced his steps, to find it was Mademoiselle de Graffenried and Mademoiselle Galley, both mounted and unable to make their horses cross the ford of the Melèze.[1]

Mademoiselle de Graffenried, Rousseau tells us, "was a very nice Bernese girl . . . Mademoiselle Galley, a year younger than she,[2] was still prettier; she had something more delicate and more subtle about her; she was at the same time very dainty and grown-up . . ."[3] They told him they were going to Madame Galley's old château near Thônes,[4] and asked whether he could get their horses across the stream. Jean Jacques took Mademoiselle Galley's mount by the bridle and led it across, the water only coming half-way up his legs: the other horse followed. He then saluted the girls and was preparing to leave them when Mademoiselle de Graffenried called after him:—

> "Not at all . . . you are not going to escape us like that. You have got wet in our service. . . . You must, if you please, come with us: we make you prisoner." My heart beat and I looked at Mademoiselle Galley. "Yes," she added, laughing at my scared appearance, "a prisoner of war. Get up behind her."

Passing through the main street of Thônes, they made their way along the valley to the north, where a little cobbled pathway led them up over the meadows to the manor of La Tour. In this sequestered valley, with the chiming of cattle-bells in their ears and great spruce-forests climbing the mountain slopes above, they felt absolutely secluded from the world. Reaching the somewhat dilapidated château, where a peasant and his wife were in charge of the farm, they had breakfast and passed the morning in gaiety and talk, playing with the peasant's children and preparing the mid-day meal. This they took in the kitchen, "the girls sitting on benches, one on either side of the long table, and

[1] *L'Idylle des Cerises*, 23–5.
[2] He is mistaken. Mademoiselle Galley was twenty, her companion, seventeen.
[3] *Confessions*, IV.
[4] Rousseau spells it "Toune."

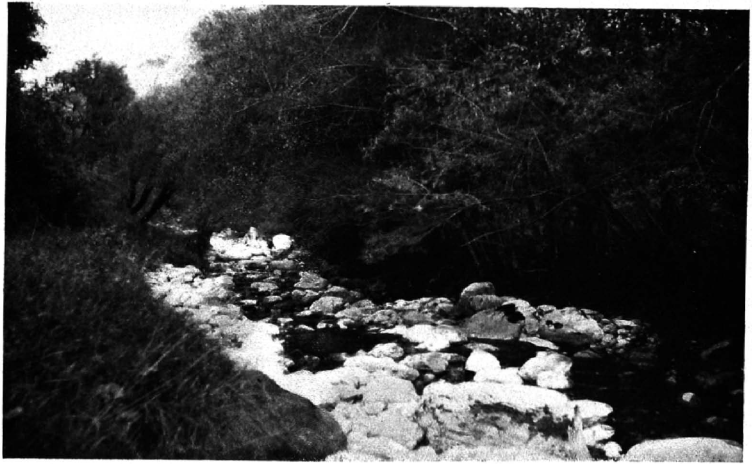
their guest between them on a three-legged stool." They were delightful companions and Jean Jacques was not sure which he liked the better. After dinner, they decided to keep the coffee for the afternoon meal, with the cream and the cakes they had brought: they then "went out into the orchard to finish their dessert with cherries." Jean Jacques climbed into a tree and threw down the bunches of fruit, while the girls held out their pinafores to catch them and sent the cherry-stones back at him through the branches.

> We spent the day in this manner, playing with the greatest liberty and always with the greatest propriety . . . and we did not in any way impose this propriety upon ourselves, it came naturally, we adopted the tone which our hearts gave us. Finally, my modesty, others will say my stupidity, was such that the greatest mark of intimacy that escaped me was, once, to kiss Mademoiselle Galley's hand. True, the circumstances lent value to this slight favour. We were alone, I was breathing with difficulty, her eyes were lowered. My lips, instead of finding words, pressed her hand which she drew softly away after it had been kissed, and she looked at me with an air that was not angry. I don't know what I might have said to her, but her friend came in. . . .[1]

They left the château towards 5 o'clock, and Rousseau took leave of the two girls at the Pont Saint-Clair in the early evening. Shortly after his return to the cobbler's, Venture came in; but Rousseau was not altogether pleased to see him. Claudine Galley and her friend disliked the adventurer and had warned Rousseau against him. Venture, however, told Jean Jacques that he had been speaking of him to M. Jean Baptiste Symond, President of the High Court of Annecy, and that they were both invited to dinner at his house the following day. The magistrate was a man of parts, and one of the greatest "characters" in the town: he was in a position to render Rousseau great services.

Jean Jacques pleased M. Symond, and the magistrate delighted Jean Jacques, who has sketched a witty and memorable portrait of him. M. Symond, he tells us, doubtless with exaggeration,

[1] *Confessions*, IV.



"The Melèze, a little tributary torrent of the Fier" (Ch. X).
This was the brook which Rousseau helped the two girls to ford. After heavy rain the water comes down here with great force.

> was assuredly not two feet high. His legs, straight, slender and even fairly long, would have made him taller if they had been vertical; but they stood slantwise like those of a very open compass. His body was not only short, but thin and in every way of an inconceivable smallness. He must have looked like a grasshopper when he was naked. His head was of natural size, with well-formed features and noble bearing.[1]

He had two voices: one deep and sonorous, which he no doubt used in the Lawcourts; the other, treble and piercing. He was a good jurist, cultivated and well-read and a charming talker; a gallant, too:

> By dint of cajoling the ladies of Annecy, he had become the fashion among them; they had him running after them like a little marmoset. He even pretended to be a lady-killer, and that amused them greatly. . . . Unfortunately this slight body sheltered a sensitive heart. A few years later, there was some unhappy affair which brought him grief, and he died of it. . . . He was assuredly a good little man: one began by laughing at him, and ended by loving him.[2]

As soon as he got away from the magistrate's house, Jean Jacques ran to the Rue Saint François,[3] where Claudine Galley lived, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. After waiting some time in vain, he decided to write,[4] and got Mademoiselle Giraud to deliver the letter. A reply came next day, but he never saw Mademoiselle Galley again.[5]

[1] Confessions, IV. [2] Ibid.

[3] This is now the Rue J. J. Rousseau. See F. and J. Serand, article quoted.

[4] He wrote to Mademoiselle Galley on this occasion, and *not* (as he says in the *Confessions*) to her friend.

[5] Madame de Warens and Madame Galley both lived in the Rue Saint François. The literary pilgrim will not find Madame de Warens's house, which was demolished in 1784; but a few yards further on, in the same street, he will see the choir-school where Rousseau lived with Monsieur Le Maistre, and opposite the choir-school, the Cathedral. The exterior of the Cathedral is undistinguished, and the tower has been partly replaced by a modern *pastiche*; but inside, massive pillars and arches of a noble simplicity lead away to the choir-stalls where Rousseau used to sing; and though much of the stained glass is modern the windows of the clerestory are old, and of exquisite design. They are all based on the vine-leaf *motif* and ingeniously varied, one window showing green on a red ground, another blue on pink, a third pink on blue, and so on. The inside of the arches, too, is painted, with intricate patterns and rich colouring.

[*continued overleaf.*

Madame de Warens still lingered in Paris; her maid's funds were running low, and she decided to rejoin her father, who had settled at Fribourg in Switzerland. It was proposed by Mademoiselle Giraud that Jean Jacques should escort Merceret on this journey. He confessed that he had no money. His situation in Annecy was in fact becoming precarious. But he reflected perhaps that the road to Fribourg led through Nyon, and that he might obtain help from his father.[1] Merceret undertook to meet the expenses of the journey, and they set off on foot.[2]

* * *

While Jean Jacques was passing the summer so agreeably among the lower Alps, Madame de Warens and M. d'Aubonne were engaged on a mission that was far from idyllic.

Like many of his compatriots, Paul Bernard d'Aubonne had spent some years as a soldier in foreign service; he had also been Colonel in the Bernese militia. Becoming châtelain of Morges, a little lakeside town between Lausanne and his native Nyon, he applied for the privilege of "noble bourgeoisie" of the place. Not only was it refused by the *Government in Berne*, but his fellow-citizens treated him in the most unfriendly manner, perhaps with reason and perhaps with gratuitous hostility. However that may be, he left Switzerland completely alienated, to embark on the

You may also make the pilgrimage to Thônes and to La Tour, following in Rousseau's footsteps and visiting each place which he describes. A steam tramway—which is liable to stop once or twice for repairs—follows as far as the Pont Saint-Clair the course of the "chemin royal" which existed in Rousseau's time. You will see the spot where Jean Jacques helped the two young ladies across the Melèze. Some miles further on, in the street of Thônes, you will pass a house once owned by Madame Galley. If you now pursue the road to Les Villards and turn to the right at the wooden crucifix, you will pass some old chalets, and climb over the meadows by the cobbled pathway that was taken by Rousseau and the two girls. In a few minutes this will lead you, under walnuts and apple-trees, to the manor of La Tour. An Alpine valley stretches ahead, with high and densely-wooded mountains to the right. Here, then, stands the house where the three friends had lunch; the farmer will show you the "Cerisier de J. J. Rousseau." And if you are lucky enough to meet Monsieur Cochat of Thônes, the courteous archæologist of the valley, you will glean far more information than can be given in the space of this note.

[1] See Benedetto, 164–5.

[2] July, 1730. See Appendix, Note IV: The Annecy Portrait.

The Château de la Tour, near Thônes (Haute-Savoie).

career of an adventurer.[1] In Paris, which he had made his home, he submitted a lottery-system to the consideration of the minister, Cardinal Fleury, who rejected it: he proposed the same system to the Sardinian Government, which did not accept it for some years.[2] At the present moment this fertile schemer had a new project on hand, which was to provoke a revolution in the Pays de Vaud and bring his native country once more under the yoke of Savoy.[3] He would thus gratify his resentment against his compatriots and perhaps obtain advancement in Turin.

The history of this odious plot still remains somewhat obscure, but it seems likely that something of it was communicated to Madame de Warens and possible that she had agreed to assist in it.[4] In the meantime, however, she had been sent to Paris by the King to increase the staff at the disposal of Comte Maffei, the Ambassador. The greatest secrecy was observed during the journey. M. d'Aubonne and Claude Anet met her at Seyssel, where she put on a mask before embarking in the "water-coach" that was to take them down the river to Lyons on their way to the French capital. It may be recalled that an alliance had been formed at this time against Austria[5] with a view to checking the growth of the Emperor's power in Italy; and that both sides were negotiating for the support of the Sardinian kingdom. Victor Amedeus had taken up a non-committal attitude between Austria and the Allies: he wished to be kept secretly informed of every phase of the negotiations, and to know just when war was likely to break out; and Madame de Warens seems to have been one of several spies engaged in this service.[6]

After finishing her work in Paris—and it was clear by the end of June that war would not be declared that year—she wrote to the King in Turin asking for an interview at which

[1] See Mugnier, 62–4. [2] Benedetto, 149. [3] Ibid., 152–3.

[4] Benedetto goes further than this. [5] The Alliance of Seville.

[6] Benedetto, 150–1. Signor Benedetto, whose book is extremely well-informed, has had access to the State Archives of Turin, which contain correspondence between Victor Amedeus II, his foreign minister, Del Borgo, and the ambassadors in Paris.

she desired to communicate a most important matter to him.[1] This matter, it has been supposed, was the plot against the Vaudois; but whether she intended to further or discourage it, is by no means certain. The scheme was explained in three memoirs which were to be dispatched to Victor Amedeus, and to which his ambassador, Maffei, refers in a letter of the 17th of August: "By the perusal of these memoirs, Your Majesty will see the project of revolution which he [d'Aubonne] proposes. The third gives an idea of the execution [of the plan.]"[2]

While awaiting a reply to her letter, Madame de Warens quarrelled with M. d'Aubonne, and left Paris for Lyons. D'Aubonne went at once to Maffei. He probably warned him that Madame de Warens might divulge the plot to the Swiss, and he certainly set the ambassador on his guard against the secret agent.[3] The very day she left the capital (24th of July), Comte Maffei wrote to the Comte de Saint-Georges, president of the Senate of Savoy in Chambéry, informing him that Madame de Warens had started from Paris with the intention of travelling by Seyssel to Annecy or Turin, and that it was important she should not leave Sardinian territory to go into Switzerland.[4] On the 31st of August he wrote to the Marquis del Borgo, who was Foreign Minister in Turin, and repeated the warning. Madame de Warens was to be watched, if possible without her being aware of it. If she cared to pursue her journey as far as Turin, this was to be permitted. The ambassador added:—

> A misunderstanding has arisen between her and the person in question [D'Aubonne], and as, without knowing the details of the business [the plot against Vaud?] she may know enough to give an idea of it, I should say his Majesty's service requires that one should observe her movements

[1] 9th July, 1730. For the text of this letter, preserved in the Municipal Library of Turin, *Recueil d'Autographes*, mazzo 40, see Benedetto, 154–5.

[2] Benedetto, 153.

[3] Ibid., 156–7.

[4] "Je prends la liberté de donner avis à Vostre Excellence qu'il est du service du Roy qu'elle ne sorte pas des Etats, surtout pour se rendre en Suisse, pour quelque raison importante." The text of the letter, preserved in the *Archives du Sénat de Savoie* is given by Mugnier, 87–8.

> and what she writes, and especially prevent her from communicating with persons of her own nation. I cannot explain to you the subject of the affair, I will send the *memoirs* of it to the king by a trustworthy person who is to start in seven or eight days. . . .[1]

Madame de Warens had stayed in Lyons from July 28th to August 11th: by way of Seyssel, she reached Chambéry on the 14th or 15th.[2] She did not betray the secret, nor apparently did she attempt to leave the country; but such measures had been taken that she would certainly have been prevented from doing so. On August 26th, the King received from his ambassador in Paris the packet of "memoirs" containing D'Aubonne's project. In his reply, dated September 2nd, he assured Maffei that he appreciated D'Aubonne's zeal and capacity, that his discretion could be counted upon, but that he did not think fit to pursue the matter at the moment.[3]

What exactly had happened? Perhaps Madame de Warens had listened to D'Aubonne in the first instance, and then, overcome with remorse, had determined to oppose his plan. She had little to hope for outside Savoy, but it is not impossible that she had done all in her power to dissuade the King from embarking on this enterprise against her native country.[4] She had herself gone to Turin to seek an interview, and whatever took place there, the outcome of it was a decision to lay aside D'Aubonne's scheme.

On the day after writing to Comte Maffei, September 3rd, Victor Amedeus II abdicated in favour of his son, who became Charles Emmanuel III.

Madame de Warens, as we have seen, had aroused serious suspicions in the mind of the ex-monarch. Her friend the abbé Coppier, of Annecy, who was in Turin at the end of

[1] Mugnier, 88–9. [2] Ibid., 95.

[3] *Archives du Sénat de Savoie*. Mugnier, 97.

[4] I have ventured to differ from Benedetto, whose arguments on this point do not seem conclusive. The whole truth of the affair may never be known; but in the absence of complete evidence, it seems better to suppose Madame de Warens innocent of plotting against the country of her birth. The hypothesis which I have put forward appears psychologically probable and also in harmony with the known facts.

July, had interceded in her favour, and on the 31st of that month he had written as follows to Mgr de Bernex:—

> . . . I have just once again being doing my best offices for poor Madame de Warens. This good lady has taken the liberty of writing to the king and asking permission to come and put herself at his feet, in Turin, which has been granted her, but she will have to return to Annessi (*sic*) and take care to lead a life still more exemplary and still more retired so as to make herself worthy of the continuation of the pension with which his Majesty favours her.[1]

Her conduct since returning to Savoy had reassured the Government as regards loyalty to her adopted country. She could not be said, however, to have improved her position, despite the services rendered in Paris; and her old-cherished scheme of becoming attached to the Court in Turin could now be relegated to the Greek Kalends. But if she could not live in the capital of Piedmont, the more modest capital of Savoy might still be open to her.[2] Before she left Turin, Charles Emmanuel seems to have promised to continue her "pension" and permitted her to change her residence, for reasons of health, from Annecy to Rumilly. Rumilly was not her goal: it was only the half-way house on the road to Chambéry.[3] Madame de Warens, who had left Turin about September 20th, lived there for less than a year, and in September 1731 when Rousseau returned from his wanderings, she was already installed in the Savoyard capital.

[1] *Archives de la Société florimontane d'Annecy* and *Les Evêques de Genève-Annecy*, p. 220–1. Quoted by Mugnier, 91.

[2] Benedetto, 162.

[3] See Benedetto, 161–2.

Chapter XI.

IN THE PAYS DE VAUD, July-October, 1730[1]

Anne Marie Merceret liked Jean Jacques, and he liked her. She was about twenty years of age: "a very good girl, not brilliant, not beautiful, but not plain either." She imitated his tones and accent, used his favourite words, and at the inns where they stayed, insisted that he should share the same room, since she was very timid. It did not occur to Jean Jacques that there could be any other motive than timidity, and the journey was completed in perfect innocence.

Passing through Geneva, Rousseau had a severe attack of home-sickness. At Nyon, he left Anne Marie at the inn and called on his father. It was a painful interview.[2] Isaac's first impulse was to embrace his son: the prodigal had returned; but he was quickly undeceived. And things went wrong almost at once. After all, as Isaac had often said to himself, he had had a lot to put up with since Suzanne's death. There was that vexatious affair with Gautier . . . and then François' disappearance. Why must Jean Jacques be so unreasonable as to run away too? Why abjure his religion, throw away his nationality, ruin his father's hopes? Isaac himself might be forced, by circumstances, to leave the city and go into exile; but he was none the less ardently patriotic and tremendously proud

[1] The dates in the *Confessions* are incorrect. Rousseau groups his adventures in Switzerland and his journey to Paris under the year 1732. He speaks of himself as twenty and Merceret as twenty-five. In reality, the return to Switzerland took place in 1730: he was eighteen and Anne Marie twenty. But there is further confusion in the *Confessions*, because he speaks of passing the winter in Neuchâtel and then describes the adventure with the Archimandrite, the journey to Paris and the arrival at Chambéry, which he still puts under 1732.

[2] If Rousseau's memory did not play him false when he described this episode (*Confessions*, IV), it was affection for his father that made him loth to recall a time when they had been at variance: this seems natural and likely.

of the name of citizen of Geneva. And here, through the folly of this renegade to Rome, the civic title was lost to his branch of the family: it would perish with himself.

At the first mention of the word *religion*, one can imagine Jean Jacques asserting his attachment to the Catholic Church. The words might be natural, but could any be more imprudent? What wonder if Isaac retorted, in the heat of the moment: "You are no longer my son."[1]

There might still have been a question of keeping him at Nyon; but Isaac's nerves were on edge, he was weary, and perhaps perplexed also to know to what trade he could put the boy. And then Jean Jacques may have been unwilling to remain. Whether his step-mother could have intervened to good effect is equally uncertain. She invited him to stay for supper, but in a manner which made it possible for him to decline: he simply left his small luggage with them, and father and son parted without being reconciled.

As the travellers approached Fribourg, the little attentions which Anne Marie had been showing Jean Jacques became less marked. He took her to her parents and had dinner with them next day; but the parting was not remarkably cordial.[2]

It may seem strange that he did not return to Annecy. But whatever he thought about it afterwards, he was not deeply attached to Madame de Warens, nor was she, for that matter, very fond of him. And he was well-advised not to go back to Nyon for the present. Isaac had heard of his son's travelling companion, and as the son humorously observes, he had of her "an opinion that was very unjust

[1] It is clear from Jean Jacques' letter to his father, written from Neuchâtel the following summer (see below, p. 84), that something of this sort had taken place. In the *Confessions*, he says that he wrote from Lausanne to his father, who sent on his packet "et me marqua d'excellentes choses, dont j'aurais dû mieux profiter." But if this be so, it must have been a verbal message; for in the letter of 1731 (*Correspondance générale*, Vol. I, No. 4, 11–14) Jean Jacques says: "Honorez moi, mon cher Pére, d'une réponce de vôtre main, *ce sera la prémiére lettre que j'aurai receue de vous des ma sortie de Genéve*. . . ." I have tried to reconstruct the interview at Nyon so as to make it harmonise with the general circumstances, the characters of Isaac and his son, and the letter of 1731.

[2] See Appendix, Note V.

and very far from the truth, but . . . natural enough." It was for Lausanne that Jean Jacques set out. "He wanted to feast his eyes on the sight of that lovely lake, which you see there in its greatest expanse."[1]

On the second day after leaving Fribourg he found himself in a village not far from Lausanne, probably Montpreveyres, and went into an inn, very hungry and without a penny in the world. He had supper, passed a pleasant night, and after breakfast offered his coat to the host, who refused it and gave him credit. Rousseau sent him the money later. He now determined to emulate the irrepressible Venture and become a wandering musician. As Lausanne was a Protestant town, he did not expect that the standard of music would be as high there as in Piedmont or Savoy. And in any case something had to be done.

Reaching Lausanne towards the 21st of July, he found quarters with an innkeeper named Perrotet, to whom he announced himself as Vaussore de Villeneuve, from Paris, come to Lausanne as a teacher of music and singing. Vaussore was an anagram of Rousseau. Perrotet, smiling inwardly as he listened to this romance, promised to look for pupils for the newcomer. His inclusive charge was five crowns a day, but he recommended M. Vaussore to take the *half-pension*, which consisted of soup mid-day and a good supper at night: he would not expect any payment until his guest had begun to earn something.

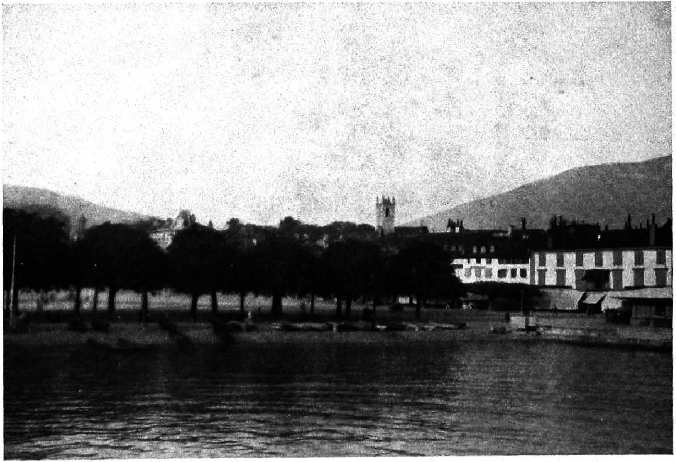
Jean Jacques was introduced before long to M. François Frédéric de Treytorrens, a Professor of Law and a well-known music-lover; and it was arranged that he should compose a new orchestral piece for one of the concerts which this gentleman occasionally gave at his house. It took a fortnight of hard work to compose the music and arrange the partitions for the different instruments; and Jean Jacques concluded his piece with a well-known minuet which he had learned from Venture and which was here presented as though it were original. It was on a night in August that the concert took place. Vaussore explained his part to

[1] *Confessions*, IV.

each of the musicians, then, with a roll of paper as bâton, tapped the desk for silence and began to beat time. "Never, since French operas have existed, did anyone hear such an uproar." The musicians were merciless: they omitted nothing. Louder and louder rose the discord, the audience opened their eyes wide with astonishment. Unfortunately, the hubbub was not great enough to drown the whispered comments. "What infernal music!" said one; and another: "What a devil's tatoo!" Jean Jacques, with the perspiration starting out on him, went on desperately to the end; but when the orchestra executed the final minuet, which everyone knew, the whole room gave way to uncontrollable laughter. The composer was congratulated by the guests on his taste in singing, and assured that the minuet would bring him fame. Poor Jean Jacques! What anguish! Next day, when one of the symphonists came to see him, he burst into tears and confessed everything. The musician promised secrecy, and by the evening all Lausanne knew Rousseau's story. "The remarkable thing," he concludes, "is that no one gave him any signs of it, not even the good Perrotet," who continued to lodge and feed him as though nothing had happened.[1]—All of which shows that Jean Jacques must have been a very lovable character, and that the people of Lausanne were extremely kind.

They were not, however, anxious to come for music-lessons, and he only had two or three fat Germans, whose simplicity equalled his own ignorance and who wearied him greatly. It was not easy, either, to keep up appearances as a Parisian. There were two real Parisians in the district. One of them, it is true, was good-natured and let him alone; but the other made a practice of asking questions about Paris and smiling maliciously at the replies! Jean Jacques' father meanwhile had sent on his little bundle, together with a message. He also had news of Mesdemoiselles Galley and Graffenried; and, strangely enough, it was the latter of whom he was now dreaming. He made no

[1] I have not hesitated to retell from the *Confessions* (Book IV) what is perhaps the best story they contain.



". . . pendant deux jours que je restai à Vevey . . ., je pris pour cette ville un amour qui m'a suivi dans tous mes voyages. . . . Je dirais volontiers à ceux qui ont du goût et qui sont sensibles: Allez à Vevey, visitez le pays, promenez-vous sur le lac. . . ." (*Confessions*, IV).

secret of his religion; and on Sundays, as there was no Catholic Church in Lausanne, he used to walk to Assens, six miles away, to hear Mass.

One day in the early autumn,[1] he decided to visit Vevey, perhaps because Madame de Warens had been born there, and more probably because the beauty of Geneva's Lake drew him on to explore its shores, and the charm of a walking-tour was something he could never resist. His path led him by the lakeside, winding in and out under the vineyards and sometimes through a village where the houses were clustered around the old, stone belfry. Sometimes he rested on a rock that overhung the water, and looked across to the Alps of Chablais, all quivering in the summer haze. At such moments a mysterious melancholy would creep over him—a new feeling, which sensitive souls all over Europe were beginning to experience, but which he felt more intensely than any. Perhaps it was the lonely splendour of lake and mountain, or the hot glimmer of the sunlight, or the longing of a heart whose aspirations filled the universe, that made his tears flow and fall one by one into the glassy lake.[2]

In Vevey, he lodged at the Hôtel de la Clef,[3] a little hostelry behind the market-place. He visited—or so we may presume—the beautiful Church of St. Martin, the old Temple and Château at La Tour de Peilz, and the vineyards towards Chailly and Clarens. "During the two days I stayed in Vevey," he writes, "I conceived an affection for that town which has followed me throughout my travels, and led me in the end to place the heroes of my novel[4] there"—an affection which all who know Vevey will agree is well-founded.

[1] Courtois, *Chronologie*, 17.

[2] *Confessions*, IV. For the beginnings of Preromantic Sensibility in the eighteenth century, see D. Mornet, *Le Romantisme en France au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1912, Ch. 1. It was only after the middle of the century that weeping became fashionable in Europe.

[3] Where a marble tablet now commemorates his visit, with a medallion of the philosopher's head, and the passage from the *Confessions* quoted at the end of this chapter.

[4] Saint-Preux and Julie d'Etanges in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Chapter XII.

THE ARCHIMANDRITE OF JERUSALEM, 1731–1

It was in October that Jean Jacques left Lausanne for Neuchâtel, drawn thither perhaps by the recollection that it was M. Lambercier's birthplace. He passed the winter there under an assumed name. A number of pupils, mostly girls, came for lessons, and he found that by teaching music he was beginning to learn a little himself. He also earned enough to repay his debt to the kind innkeeper at Lausanne, who, trusting him to the last, had forwarded his luggage. Mademoiselle Giraud had written to him in the autumn, and now another letter, dated November 21st, was forwarded and reached him at Neuchâtel. From these, it appeared that Madame de Warens had come back from Paris and was very angry about his conduct. Jean Jacques did not see that he had given her reason for complaint. He was, moreover, doing fairly well with his teaching, and he left the letters unanswered for the moment.[1]

He had no fixed object for his imagination and was incapable at present of finding an outlet in art; but his temperament continued to make demands on him that were acute and insistent. On Sundays and holidays he would go for long walks in the forest and on the Jura, "wandering, dreaming, sighing." It was thus that he made the acquaintance of the *Montagnons* whose châlets were dotted all over one of the hills near the city. Their community was in large measure self-supporting. It had its own joiners, locksmiths and glaziers. Each family cultivated the land around its châlet and spent the winter months in manufacturing clocks, watches and many other objects in wood or metal, for sale

[1] One cannot leave the year 1730 without recording the birth in Paris, on December 18th, of Sophie de la Live de Bellegarde, the future Comtesse d'Houdetot, for whom Jean Jacques twenty-seven years later was to have the one undoubted passion of his life.

abroad. They were an ingenious and self-reliant folk. Thus they made telescopes, barometers and compasses, and many of them were good musicians: Jean Jacques was impressed by their singing:—

> One of their most frequent amusements is to sing with their wives and children the Psalms in four parts; one is amazed to hear, coming from these rustic cabins, the powerful and virile harmony of Goudimel, so long forgotten by our learned artists.[1]

Goudimel, it will be recalled, was the sixteenth-century Burgundian who had set to music the metrical version of the Psalms by Marot and De Bèze. Jean Jacques might not know much at this time about the technique of the art, but he knew what appealed to his instinct. This music of Goudimel's had a similar quality to the airs of the folk-songs he had heard in the Pays de Vaud and those which his aunt used to sing in Geneva; it inclined him to prefer a simple and natural melody to the complications of intellectual music, and thus went to form the principles which he was later to adopt.[2]

During one of his excursions in April, 1731, he reached the village of Boudry on the western side of the lake, and going into an inn for dinner, found in the parlour an extraordinary personage.

This personage wore a violet cassock and fur cap, and had a majestic, flowing beard. He did not know French or German and was finding difficulty in making himself understood. Rousseau fancied that he was trying to speak Italian, and said a few words in that language. At once the stranger came and embraced him cordially, inviting the young man to join him at dinner. Rousseau accepted, without hesitation. While eating, the stranger explained that he was a Greek prelate, Archimandrite of Jerusalem in fact, and that he had come to Europe to collect alms for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre. Both the Czarina and the Emperor had given him licences. His name was

[1] *Lettre à M. D'Alembert*, éd. Brunel, 93–6.
[2] On this question, see B. Bouvier, *J. J. Rousseau*, 54–7.

Father Athanasius Paulus, of the Order of St. Peter and St. Paul of Jerusalem. Before the day was out, Jean Jacques had decided to abandon his Neuchâtel pupils and to accompany the archimandrite as secretary and interpreter, with Jerusalem as the goal of their journey!

The fantastic couple began operations at Fribourg, where they asked the Council to permit them to collect in the city and the canton. On April 16th permission was given for a month: the archimandrite and his companion were to receive board and lodging in the hospice for that period, and take their meals at the monks' table; the Chancellery would make a grant of eight mirlitons. Four days later, the following entry was made in the Council's Records:—

> The licence to collect, granted to Father Athanasius Paulus, shall be withdrawn from him, and the present he is to receive shall be reduced to two mirlitons. The expenses will be paid, he will have to leave the country.[1]

Fribourg had grown suspicious! Their next halt was in Berne, where they stayed at the *Faucon*. The company was numerous, the table excellent. While Rousseau made up for the meagre fare of the last six months, the Reverend Father delighted the guests with his jollity and his sallies. On the 25th of April they had an interview with the Senate, and Jean Jacques delivered a most eloquent harangue: it was the one occasion in his life that he spoke before a sovereign assembly, and the one occasion that he spoke well, without the nervous agitation that usually afflicted him in public. He eulogised those princes who had contributed to the cause, and expressed confidence that their Excellencies would be no less munificent. It was a good work, that might appeal to all Christians without distinction of sect. The oration met with success, and the treasurer was instructed to pay ten crowns to Father Athanasius Paulus, who is

[1] *Manual of the Council of Fribourg*, Friday, 20th April, 1731.—These details are the discovery of M. Ritter, who has translated from the German the pages in the Records of the Councils of Fribourg, Berne and Solothurn which relate to the pseudo-Archimandrite. See *La famille et la jeunesse de J. J. Rousseau*, ed. 1926, 172–3. The date of the entries is of value in confirming the chronology of Rousseau's life.

noted this time as making "a collection for the ransoming of Christian slaves."[1]

The archimandrite was a man of resource, but his adventures were drawing to an inglorious end. At Solothurn he solicited the authorities[2] on behalf of "the poor Christians of Palestine." Whether news had preceded him from Fribourg or Berne and the varied objects of his pilgrimage had aroused suspicion, it is impossible to say. It was decided that he should be examined by the Provost. In the meantime, he was unfortunate enough to call on the Marquis de Bonac, French Ambassador to the Helvetic Corps. M. de Bonac had formerly been Ambassador in Constantinople: he knew something about the Holy Sepulchre and also about Levantine monks. The interview lasted a quarter of an hour, after which Father Athanasius Paulus was arrested as an impostor and expelled from the country.

Rousseau's papers described him as a Parisian, and M. de Bonac required an explanation of this. Jean Jacques took the course of confiding the whole story to the Ambassador, who proved sympathetic (the episode must have amused him immensely), presented Jean Jacques to Madame de Bonac and arranged to lodge him at the Embassy until they saw what might be done for him. As the chief secretary, M. de la Martinière, showed Rousseau to his room, he said: "In the Comte de Luc's time this room was occupied by a celebrated man who bore the same name as you. Whether you will replace him so completely that people will have cause to say: Rousseau I, Rousseau II, depends on yourself."

Jean Jacques took the pleasantry in all seriousness. The celebrated man was Jean Baptiste Rousseau, a popular author of odes and lyrics. Jean Jacques began to read his works, and imitated him forthwith in a cantata to Madame de Bonac. This, and a rhymed letter which he produced the same year, are by no means remarkable for their merit;

[1] *Manual of the Council of Berne*, Wednesday, 25th April, 1731. (Ritter, 173.)

[2] 27th April.

but his imagination was not of a type to find expression in the mould of French eighteenth century verse.

* * *

Jean Jacques returned to Neuchâtel early in May.[1] The parents of his pupils, however, had been scandalised at his abrupt disappearance and no longer required his services; besides, most of them were going into the country for the summer. With no money coming in, the young music-master was soon in debt and faced with starvation. He had received another letter from Mademoiselle Giraud, to whom he had sent his address, and he now decided to write to her[2] again. Perhaps his friends in Annecy would be able to help him. After all, he had worked—from time to time—at his music; and he was sincerely attached to the Catholic religion. I trust,[3] he wrote:—

> that you will let me know you have received this letter, I don't doubt that you still feel for me the same kindness that you have shown me up to the present; and so I write in the full confidence that you will, as I believe, readily forgive me. . . .[4]
>
> I am very alive to Madame de W[arens]'s kindness in still remembering me. I cannot tell you what consolation the news has given me, and protest that never has anything distressed me so keenly as incurring her displeasure. I have already had the honour of telling you, Mademoiselle, that I was unaware of the misdeeds[5] which could have made me guilty in her eyes, but up to now the fear of displeasing her has prevented me from taking the liberty of writing to her to justify myself. . . .

Mademoiselle Giraud had referred more than once to Rousseau's "misdeeds" and it is not hard to see why he was in disgrace with Madame de Warens. His desertion of M. Le Maistre was not a noble act, and his departure for

[1] *The Confessions* say nothing of this; but it is clear from Rousseau's letters to Mlle. Giraud and to his father that he had gone back to Neuchâtel. See] Théophile Dufour, *Pages inédites de J. J. Rousseau. Annales*, II (1906), 164; and in *Correspondance générale*, I, 10, note.

[2] And *not*, as stated in old editions, to Mlle. de Graffenried. See Dufour, *Annales*, II, 164–5, and *Corresp. générale*, I, 7–8. M. Dufour points out that the tone of the letter, the messages for Mlle. de Gr[affenried] and Mme. de W[arens], all show that Mlle. Giraud was the addressee.

[3] The first sheet of the letter has been lost.

[4] First published in 1924.

[5] "Fautes."

Switzerland in company with Anne Marie seemed a very equivocal one. More serious perhaps, in her eyes, was the inconsequent way in which he was compromising his own future. After all the trouble she had taken to have him trained, first for the priesthood and then in singing and music, he had failed in one vocation and abandoned his apprenticeship in the other: to crown all, he had gone into a Protestant country without permission and might at any moment return to his old faith; and if that happened, all her work would be in vain.

Jean Jacques, therefore, urged Mademoiselle Giraud to make his peace with Madame de Warens:—

> It was doing me wrong to ask whether I wished her to have my address: can I have any secret from a person to whom I owe everything? I do not eat a slice of bread but what I receive from her; if it were not for the pains taken by this charitable lady, I should already perhaps be dead of hunger. . . . Hasten then, Mademoiselle, I beg of you, intercede for me and try to get me permission to justify myself.
>
> I received your letter of the 21st November, addressed to Lausanne; I had given careful instructions and it was sent on at once. The charming Mademoiselle de Gr[affrenried][1] is still in my heart and I burn with impatience to have news of her; be good enough to ask her, if she is still at Annecy, whether she would accept a letter from me. . . .

He understood the principal cause of Madame de Warens's anxiety and hastened to reassure his correspondent:—

> Be persuaded, Mademoiselle, my religion is deeply engraved in my heart and nothing can efface it . . . it was not to amuse myself that I changed my name and country, and that every moment I risk being regarded as a rascal and perhaps a spy. . . . I beg of you to . . . honour me with a prompt answer because I shall not perhaps stay long in this city; my affairs here are in a very bad way; I am already heavily in debt and only have one pupil. Everyone is in the country; I don't know how to leave, or to stay. . . . Take care not to say anything about this to Madame de W.; I would rather die than have her know that I am in the least indigence. . . .[2]

[1] And not Mlle. Galley, as indicated by old editions of the *Correspondance*. Rousseau wrote Gr . . .

[2] *Correspondance générale*, I (1924), 7–10, No. 3.

About the same time,[1] and perhaps the same day, he sent a piteous appeal to Nyon:—

MY DEAR FATHER,

Despite the painful assurances you gave me that you no longer regarded me as your son,[2] I still venture to have recourse to you as to the best of all fathers, and whatever the just motives of hatred which you must have against me [he had written: "which I have given you," and corrected it], the name of an unfortunate and repentant son effaces them in your heart. . . . You are still my dear father, and even if I felt only the weight of my misdeeds, I am punished enough by being criminal [Jean Jacques altered this to "guilty," and finally crossed out "guilty" to reinsert "criminal"]. But alas! there are still many other reasons which would make your anger change to a legitimate compassion, if you knew all about them; the misfortunes which have long overwhelmed me expiate only too well the crimes of which I feel guilty. . . .

A sad fate it is to have one's heart full of bitterness and not dare even to exhale one's sorrow in a few sighs; a sad fate to be abandoned by a father whom one might have delighted and consoled, but still more sad to be forced to be forever ungrateful and unhappy, and to be obliged to drag over the whole earth one's misery and remorse. Your eyes would fill with tears if you were thoroughly acquainted with my true situation; indignation would soon give place to pity. . . . I should not have dared to be so free as to write to you, if I had not been forced by an urgent necessity . . . Whatever I may have to fear from your refusal, I none the less flatter myself with some hope. . . . In fact, my dear father, I must confess that I am a prey, at Neuchâtel, to poverty occasioned by my imprudence; as I had no talent but music to help me, I thought I should do well to make use of it if I could; and seeing that I did not yet know enough to exercise it in Catholic countries, I stopped at Lausanne, where I taught for a few months. Coming on from there to Neuchâtel, I found myself able, after a short time, thanks to fairly considerable gains joined to most exemplary conduct, to discharge some debts which I had at Lausanne; but having left here rather thoughtlessly,[3] after a long series of adventures . . . I have returned; but the sorrow which I can without vanity say that my pupils experienced at my

[1] May, 1731.

[2] This shows what had really happened during the interview at Nyon. See above, p. 74.

[3] "Étant sorti d'icy un peu inconsidérément."

departure has been repaid on my return by the messages I receive from them, that they do not want to start again, so that being without the necessary help, I have contracted a few debts here which prevent me from leaving the place with honour. . . .

. . . If I have several times refused a dazzling fortune,[1] it is because I have more respect for obscurity with freedom than for a brilliant slavery. My wishes are going to be fulfilled and I hope I shall soon enjoy a sweet and peaceful lot without depending on any but myself, and on a father whose orders I desire always to respect and follow. . .

Honour me, my dear father, with a reply, it will be the first letter I shall have received from you since I left Geneva. . . . Do me the favour of hastening, for I am in very pressing need. My address is appended—you will easily guess the reasons which have made me adopt an assumed name; your prudent discretion will not let you make this letter public or show it to anyone but my dear mother, whom I assure of my very humble respects, and whom I beg, with tears in my eyes, to be good enough to forgive me my faults and restore me her affection. As for you, my dear father, I shall never find rest until I have deserved the return of your affection, and I flatter myself that the day will yet come when you will have real pleasure in owning me,

My dear Father,

As your very humble and very obedient servant and son.[2]

One can imagine Isaac Rousseau's comments as he read this characteristic appeal. "Jean Jacques knows my terms," he would say. "If he likes to come back to me, and give up his Catholicism, everything will be all right. But if he will not, then let those who have converted him look after him now. He has got to choose." Jean Jacques realised this, but he was not ready to accept his father's terms. Despite his troubles, however, life was not entirely unbearable. He began to try his hand at literature, and from time to time he thought of Mademoiselle de Graffenried,

[1] The only possible occasion was in the house of the Solars at Turin. There is, however, something prophetic in Jean Jacques' boasts: what he says about liberty and serfdom is true of his later life and character.

[2] *Correspondance générale*, I, 11–14, No. 4.—Jean Jacques is still unformed as a writer, but much of his character, as we know it, is already in evidence: a certain pride and self-reliance, a feeling that he can carve out a destiny for himself by his owne fforts; and at the same time, simplicity and affection.

with whom he had ridden up the valley of the Fier that summer morning, a year ago. His *Plan of an Idyll* was probably inspired by her[1]:—

> Cruel love (wrote Jean Jacques), why do you always present to my eyes the vain image of my past pleasures? . . . I loved, I flattered myself on being listened to, I saw every day the precious object of the tenderest affection and had the pleasure of speaking to her of my love without vexing her.
>
> To-day I am deprived of all this, and there only remains to me of this former felicity the frightful idea of the eternal absence which must succeed it; and despite my ills, I still hesitate to judge between Phyllis and myself, as to which is the greater, my affection or her perfidy.[2]

Love, doubtless, was not very cruel on this occasion, and the literary motive outweighed the personal one.

When no reply came from Isaac, it was evident that Jean Jacques could not expect help from that quarter, for the present at least. He had written, however, to the Marquis de Bonac and to his old patron the Bishop of Annecy,[3] to whom he mentioned the French Ambassador. Perhaps also Madame de Warens had put in a word on his behalf. Mgr de Bernex, whose kindness could not be discouraged, acted without delay. He recommended his protégé to M. de Bonac,[4] and Rousseau was instructed to return to Solothurn. On his arrival, it was arranged that he should go to Paris. The interpreter, M. de Merveilleux, had a friend in Paris named Colonel Godard, a Swiss officer in the French service, whose nephew, though still very young, was entering the army. Jean Jacques was to be the boy's tutor. He was given letters of introduction, one hundred francs, some good advice, and so set off.

[1] It appears in the same *cahier* as the minute of the letter to Isaac. M. Théophile Dufour suggests that he was perhaps thinking of Mme. de Warens (*Correspondance générale,* I, 14). I venture to suppose that it was Mlle. de Graffenried. Whatever his retrospective emotions, it does not appear that he loved Mme. de Warens at this time.

[2] *Correspondance générale,* I, 14–15.

[3] See Ritter, 175–6.

[4] "Ce grand Evêque . . . me recommanda encore à Monsieur le Marquis de Bonac, Ambassadeur de France auprés du Corps Helvétique. . . . Il me seroit glorieux de détailler à S. E. ce que ces deux Seigneurs avoient eu la bonté de concerter pour mon établissement. . ." (*Mémoire à S. E. Monseigneur le Gouverneur de Savoie,* Mars 1739. *Correspondance générale,* I, 109, No. 32.)

Chapter XIII.

ON THE ROAD IN FRANCE, June-September, 1731

Jean Jacques took a fortnight to walk to Paris. It was a happy fortnight, for he had no cares in the world, and day-dreams kept him company. Contrary to his principles and his nature, they were ambitious dreams. Destined to be a cadet in the army, he could already imagine himself an officer of engineers and even a field-marshal. True, he was short-sighted; but this defect had not prevented Marshal Schomberg from becoming one of the most illustrious soldiers of his day. Jean Jacques soon, however, forgot his military future as he became absorbed in the scenery and in the joy of liberty recovered. By way of Belfort, Langres and Chaumont, he reached the French capital towards the middle of June.

Paris was at that time very different from the city of to-day, with its handsome flats and offices and its spacious boulevards. The dusty streets of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, the filthy tenements which he passed, the squalor of beggars and hawkers, all were most repulsive to Rousseau and gave him a prejudice against the capital from which he never completely recovered.

He was kindly received by Madame de Merveilleux and her son, who was an officer in the Guards; but the terms proposed by Colonel Godard were *not* attractive. Rousseau was to be attached to Godard's nephew, not as tutor but as a sort of valet; to receive only his pay as a cadet, and the uniform issued for the regiment. A miserly proposition. His friends advised him to decline it. Madame de Merveilleux had given him an open invitation to her table, and Jean Jacques, whose resources were again running low, frequently availed himself of this. She and her son tried to find him another post; a small remittance, too, arrived from

M. de Bonac. But Rousseau was tired of waiting, and tired of Paris.[1] His thoughts began to turn to Madame de Warens, who had been here so recently on some obscure business. From enquiries made by Madame de Merveilleux, it appeared that she had already left the city[2]; but it was not definitely known whether she had gone to Turin or to Savoy, and "some said that she had returned to Switzerland."[3] Probably she was in Savoy, and it might be possible to find her again: Jean Jacques, therefore, took the road for Lyons.

It was one of the most enjoyable walks of his life. From Auxerre he dispatched an impertinent satire to Colonel Godard, after which he gave no more thought to the miser and his nephew. The season, the country, exercise and health, all conspired to the happiness of the walker. Never had fancy created more brilliant day-dreams, never had he wandered more gladly in the land of reverie.

He frequently left the main road: on one occasion he even lost his way and, overcome with hunger and thirst, was forced to seek hospitality at a peasant's cabin. The peasant, suspicious of this eccentric young man, produced some skimmed milk and a barley-loaf, which was poor fare for the famished traveller. But Jean Jacques' open and artless manner presently reassuring him, he opened a trap-door concealed in the kitchen and brought out of his secret larder a well-cured ham and a bottle of good wine. Rousseau does not say whether this delightful episode took place in the Beaune country, but it is likely enough. Finally, an omelette was cooked, and the visitor made a memorable feast. When he spoke of paying his host, however, the latter's fears revived: he dreaded the agents of the companies which collected the pole-tax and excise duties; if he did not want to be mulcted, it was necessary to give the impression of living in penury—all of which sank into Rousseau's mind and filled him with indignation against a system that wrung money from the peasants and middle-

[1] See Appendix VI. *Was Rousseau a "constitutional dromomaniac"?*

[2] She had left Paris about a year before—in July, 1730.

[3] *Confessions*, IV. Evidence of the suspicions that existed regarding her. See above, p. 70.

classes, and in large measure exempted the nobility and higher clergy from taxation.

As he approached Lyons, Rousseau remembered he was near the scene of the *Astrée*, that famous novel which he and his father used to read. It might be possible to turn aside and visit those upland meadows on the banks of the Lignon where, of old, Diane, Silvandre and the other shepherds and shepherdesses had known the sorrows that often fall to the lot of true lovers. When he enquired his way of the hostess at a wayside inn, she assured him that the region now contained several iron-foundries and that a good workman, such as she took him to be, would have a reasonable chance of finding employment. This well-meant information effectually quelled Jean Jacques' ardour, and he decided after all not to visit the land of faithful shepherds.

He was not without friends at Lyons, having made the acquaintance of Mademoiselle du Châtelet during his previous visit. She told him, when he called on her, that Madame de Warens had passed through the city on her return from Paris, but she could not say where she was at the moment. She proposed to write to her and suggested that M. Rousseau should await the reply.

Rousseau did not like to confess his destitution. He went to lodge at the Hôtel Notre Dame de Pitié near the Place Bellecour; but it was necessary to eke out his resources by taking the plainest meals at a tavern, and sometimes he passed the night on a bench in the open. It was in the month of September. One evening, after a very hot day, Jean Jacques found himself on the banks of the Saône, in the green valley north of Lyons. A few red clouds glowed in the west and the smooth waters, sliding by, were all suffused with pink. A delightful calm had fallen, the air was cool. In the trees above his head, nightingales had begun to sing. . . . It was late in the night when the charmed wanderer remembered that he was tired and lying down in the niche of a garden-wall, let Philomel sing him to sleep.

When he awoke, it was with a sense of ecstasy, as though he had awakened at the beginning of time and was tasting

existence in all its freshness. The loveliest landscape lay before him. He shook himself and set out for the city, "determined to spend" the two silver coins that remained "on a good breakfast."[1]

A light heart always invites sympathy and the optimist sooner or later is justified. As Jean Jacques went along singing a Cantata of Batistini's, he heard steps behind him and was presently overtaken by a monk, who entered into conversation. M. Rolichon, as he was called, soon discovered something of the boy's history; and having learned that Jean Jacques knew a little about music, for which he himself had a passion, offered him some copying to do. For four or five days, while the work was in hand, Rousseau was lodged by his new acquaintance and able to make amends for his long fast by the generous meals that were provided. The autumn of 1731 was the last time on which he was faced with starvation, although the experience left no painful mark on his memory.

A few days afterwards came a letter from Madame de Warens with a remittance for Jean Jacques and instructions to join her: she was now living in Chambéry. During his last week in Lyons, Jean Jacques spent many hours in the company of Mademoiselle du Châtelet, at the convent of Chazeaux. He also met other ladies who were *pensionnaires* of the convent, and in particular, Suzanne Serre, a little girl of eleven, who was to make a great impression on him in a few years' time.

All was ready at last and he again took the road, this time for the capital of Savoy. More and more, of late, his fancy had been seeking compensation for the defects of the world about him by creating a perfect world in reverie. Even in the normal man imagination often works by contraries, and the imaginative artist is still more liable to this pleasant and dangerous habit. When Gustave Flaubert was a young man living in Normandy, his dreams were constantly taking him to the romantic East, to Damascus and the old temples of the Nile. When he actually journeyed up the Nile, he

[1] *Confessions*, IV.

was thinking of Normandy and composing the story of Emma Bovary. The habit may easily become a malady, as after it has passed a certain point, the sufferer ceases to find any satisfaction in the realities of life. Rousseau was not subject to this aberration; nor did his faculty to create dream-worlds prevent him from appreciating to the full the simple joys of life as they came.

On the present occasion, there were no fears to trouble him. And because the world offered all he needed and because he was once more on foot, with happiness waiting at the journey's end, he had no need to summon to his aid those fascinating dreams. How his heart thrilled when he saw the first fir-forests, shadowy and mysterious, rising mile after mile along the flank of the mountains! In the plain, he had never been completely satisfied. By the *Route des Echelles*, where the stream thunders far below in the depths of a rocky gorge, he lay for hours on the edge of the precipice, gazing down fascinated into the blue abyss and from time to time pushing a rock over the edge and watching it bound from point to point, burst into a thousand fragments and vanish at last into the torrent. The Falls of Couz also appealed mightily to his imagination. Here the water shoots so far out from the cliff that it is sometimes possible, by watching one's chance, to pass under it without being drenched; but Jean Jacques was not so lucky on this occasion.

And so at last, in October 1731, he reached Chambéry to be welcomed in her new home by Madame de Warens, who had procured him a place as clerk in the offices of the *Cadastre* or Land-Survey.

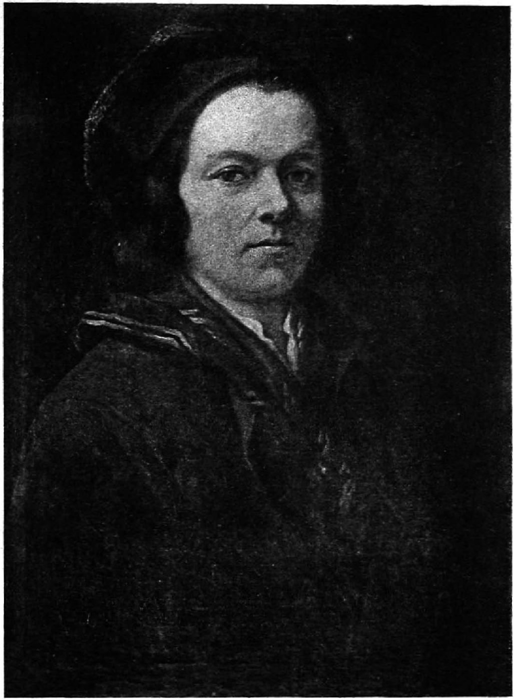
Chapter XIV.

THE MUSIC-MASTER, 1731–4

MADAME DE WARENS had decided to overlook Jean Jacques' escapade. After all, until he was settled in some profession, the responsibility incurred in furthering his flight from Geneva remained where it was. And then there was something naïve and poetical about this young scapegrace, which seemed always new. And so she had found him a situation and given him an attic in the old house she had taken in Chambéry.

The Sardinian Government had instituted a general survey of the country and a register of land-values, with a view to an equitable assessment of taxation. Title-deeds were examined by the officials of the *Cadastre*; and many were the anxious landowners who visited the Intendant's offices on this business. The authorities were not always as satisfied as the owners regarding the validity of the documents in question; and Jean Jacques had the opportunity of seeing how they proceeded to a "verification of the titles"—a phrase of feudal procedure which stuck in his mind and which he afterwards used in a well-known passage of the *Social Contract*.[1] Throughout the winter of 1731–2, he worked eight hours a day in the offices of the *Cadastre*, but this regular employment soon began to pall on him and he became once more restless and unsettled. His health,

[1] "Je n'ai rien dit du roi Adam, ni de l'empereur Noé, père de trois grands monarques qui se partagèrent l'univers. . . . J'espère qu'on me saura gré de cette modération; car, descendant directement de l'un de ces princes, et peut-être de la branche aînée, que sais-je si, par la *vérification des titres*, je ne me trouverais point le légitime roi du genre humain?" (Book I, Ch. 2.) The explanation of this phrase is due to M. F. Vermale in *Les Sources savoisiennes du "Contrat social." Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, July-Sept. 1925, 337–343.



The Young Rousseau.
From the portrait in the possession of Monsieur le Commandant Favre, of Annecy.

too, was bad, and in July, 1732,[1] he resigned his post and began to go round giving music-lessons to the young ladies of the aristocracy.

He and *Maman* in the meantime had resumed the terms of affection and familiarity in which they had lived at Annecy. Madame de Warens, it will be remembered, possessed an invaluable servant in Claude Anet: gardener, steward and right-hand man, this young Swiss was attached to her by more than common fidelity. Soon after Jean Jacques had rejoined the household, Anet had a quarrel with Madame de Warens and tried to poison himself: his mistress was frantic: however, she managed to save his life, and the two were reconciled. Jean Jacques, who witnessed the incident, realised that they were united by a closer bond than was generally known. Himself exempt from jealousy, at least in its normal form, he failed to understand that others might feel it and that he might be the cause of it. He conceived a real affection for Claude Anet, and as for Madame de Warens, he was beginning to regard her as his adopted mother.

In 1733 Jean Jacques came of age and thought he might now receive his share of his own mother's fortune, including a field near Sargy, in the bailiwick of Gex, which had belonged to her uncle the minister and which she had inherited. He therefore wrote and asked his father to meet him in Geneva; but Isaac Rousseau failing to appear, and Jean Jacques having nothing better to do, he pursued his journey to the monastery of Cluses, where the monks administered the milk-cure prescribed for his illness.

> It's a true saying (he wrote to Madame de Warens) that the black sheep is caught by the wolf. I was in Geneva, gay as a lark, and thinking I would conclude a certain arrangement with my father. . . but imagination gallops ahead, while reality does not always follow it. My father did not come, and wrote me, as the Reverend Father here puts it, the letter of a true Gascon. . . .[2]

[1] After nine months, and *not* after two years. See A. François, *J. J. Rousseau: Autographes de Jeunesse. Annales*, XIII (1920-1), 187.
[2] Cluses, 31 August, 1733. *Corresp. générale*, I, p. 19, No. 6.

—which meant that he did not write at all. Isaac, however, had not forgotten his son's interests. The truth is, Jean Jacques would not attain his legal majority, under Genevese law, until he was twenty-five. But as he was now in his twenty-second year, it was possible to confer a formal procuration upon him. Accordingly, on the 4th November of this year, Isaac signed, together with M. Puthod, "sworn notary" at Nyon "of Their Excellencies of Berne," a deed of attorney conferring on "his absent son" . . . "charge and full power . . . to take a parcel of meadow . . . which belongs to the said Sieur Jean Jaques Rousseau by legitimate succession from the late Demoiselle Susanne Bernard . . . his mother . . . the state of minority of the said Sr. Jean Jaques Rousseau giving the said Sieur his father right to confer this present power of attorney upon him by virtue of which he may act by all friendly and legal ways . . . to put himself and have himself put in possession of the said field . . . his father giving him full power to sell alienate and engage it as his own property. . . ."[1] Jean Jacques remained, however, for some time ignorant of the benefit conferred upon him.

Other matters had been occupying his attention. The War of the Polish Succession had just broken out, and Sardinia had joined France against Austria[2]: several French columns were thus able to pass through Savoy on their way to the Milanese, and Rousseau had the honour of an introduction to Colonel de la Trémouille. He began to read the papers and to follow the affairs of Europe and the events of the war with passionate interest. All his sympathies were with France. He had conceived a strong partiality for that kindly people. Any reverse to their arms afflicted him, and he joyfully applauded even their minor successes.

He continued, meanwhile, to go from house to house giving lessons, but the system had its disadvantages. Madame

[1] This matter has been brought to light and the documents in question published by M. F. Aubert: *J. J. Rousseau et Nyon* in *Annales*, XVII (Geneva, 1928), 179–191.

[2] October, 1733.

Lard, the mother of one of his pupils, became inordinately and markedly fond of him. Madame de Warens observed it. She had been treating him with great kindness and she was prepared to push her kindness even further. Since deserting her husband, she had discovered an infallible means of ensuring the fidelity of those who might be useful to her. Rousseau was already the object of one lady's attentions and his protectress was afraid of losing him: she, therefore, offered him the same favour as she had already given her steward. It was in a little garden which she rented in the suburbs of Chambéry that this singular proposal was made, and Jean Jacques was given a week to think it over.[1]

Jean Jacques' feelings were mixed; he yielded but he was not happy.[2] He would have avoided the association if it had been easy to do so. Madame de Warens wanted him to become altogether a man: she arranged for him to receive lessons in fencing and dancing; and she desired him and Claude Anet to live contentedly together in this union of hearts which she had created! "How many times," he writes, "did she . . . make us embrace with tears, telling us that we were both necessary for her life's happiness."

Claude Anet found it less easy to accept the situation than did Jean Jacques. In the following March he fell ill and died—from an attack of pleurisy, as Rousseau believed, and also perhaps from the blow to his affections. He had been a most efficient steward, and now that he was gone, the household fell at once into disorder. There were times when life was not at all comfortable or idyllic. Jean Jacques discovered that the management of a house was no simple task, and also that Madame de Warens's finances were in a most unsatisfactory condition. Casting about in his mind for some solution, he could think of nothing better than to improve his knowledge of music with a view to obtaining more engagements and higher fees. The abbé Antoine Blanchard, who had been music-master of the Cathedral at Besançon, was spoken of as a good teacher of

[1] See *Confessions*, V.
[2] See Appendix, Note VII.

harmony, and Jean Jacques decided to go and take lessons from him.

He was provided with a horse, and on his way through Switzerland was able to visit his aunt, Madame Bernard, at Geneva, and his father at Nyon. The end of June found him at Besançon. He and the abbé were delighted with one another. M. Blanchard complimented Rousseau on his talents and held out hopes of a brilliant position in Paris: whereupon Rousseau dispatched a letter to Madame de Warens to inform her of his good fortune:—

Besançon, 29th *June*.

MADAME,

I have the honour of writing to you the day after my arrival at Besançon. . . . I went this morning to pay my respects to M. l'abbé Blanchard, who entertained the Comte de Saint-Rieux and myself to dinner. . . . He told me that he would be leaving in a month for Paris, where he is going to take the place of M. Campra, who is ill; and as the latter is very old, M. Blanchard hopes to succeed him in the office of Intendant, first Music-Master in the King's Chamber and Councillor to His Majesty. He has given me his word of honour that in the event of this project succeeding, he will procure me an appointment in the Chapel or in the King's Chamber, at the end of two years at latest. These are brilliant and lucrative posts . . . so I thanked him warmly, assuring him that I would spare no pains to perfect myself in the art of composing, for which he considers I have a remarkable talent. I am entertaining him to supper this evening, with two or three officers of the King's Regiment whom I met at the concert. . . .

I have, therefore, resolved to return in a few days to Chambéry, where I shall amuse myself with teaching for two years. . . . Be good enough, Madame, to write and tell me whether I shall be received with pleasure and given any pupils. . . . Do me the honour of replying by the first mail; and in case you see there is no opening for me at Chambéry, you will please be good enough to tell me; and as I still have two other lines of action to choose from, I shall take the liberty of consulting your judgment on the option of going straight to Paris with M. Blanchard, or to the Ambassador at Solothurn. . . .

All considered, I do not repent of having made this little

journey, which may be very useful to me in the future. I await your orders, Madame, with submission and remain your respectful servant,

J. J. ROUSSEAU.[1]

Jean Jacques' luggage meanwhile had been examined at the frontier-station of Les Rousses, in the Jura, where the officials had discovered and confiscated a parody of Racine's *Mithridate*. The principal rôles in the parody, of which Jean Jacques had only read a few lines, were attributed to well-known ecclesiastics. The Government took a severe view of this sort of thing, and Rousseau's name was almost certainly black-listed. The episode alarmed both Madame de Warens and himself and five years later he was still afraid that the authorities had not forgotten it.[2] It accounted perhaps for the fact that the abbé Blanchard's offers of a brilliant post in Paris did not materialise.

The reply to his letter from Besançon must have been satisfactory, for he was soon back in Chambéry and taking part in the fashionable concerts that were given there. Both music and amateur theatricals were much in vogue. Jean Jacques had learned a good deal since that memorable experience in Lausanne, and he was now able to compose a few simple pieces, including a cantata which was highly applauded. He and Madame de Warens still moved in the best society; three or four of the young ladies had been Rousseau's pupils; and he had the opportunity at this time of making new acquaintances in M. de Gauffecourt, a

[1] *Corresp. générale*, I, 16–18, No. 5. Some doubt exists as to the date of this letter, and, in consequence, of Rousseau's visit to Besançon. Early editions of Rousseau's works date it 1732; later editions (Musset-Pathay, and Hachette), 1735. The editors of the *Correspondance générale* have replaced it in the year 1732; but M. L. J. Courtois shows that while 1735 is most unlikely, it is hardly probable, either, that Jean Jacques would make such a journey in 1732—the year after his entry into the *Cadastre*. The abbé Blanchard had, it is true, been dismissed in 1732 on account of "frequent absences and bad conduct," but it is possible that in 1734 (the date adopted by M. Courtois. See *Chronologie*, 23) the abbé, though employed in Paris, had returned to Besançon for a short holiday or on business. See L. J. Cortois in *Bulletin de l'Institut national genevois*, XLV (1922), 158–60.

[2] See Mugnier, 145. Jean Jacques knew so little about the book he had purchased that he described it in the *Confessions* as a *Jansenist* parody; the truth, as M. Mugnier shows, is that if anything it was anti-Jansenist.

capable and amusing Genevese who afterwards made a fortune as contractor to the State, and in M. de la Closure, French minister in Geneva, who had known Rousseau's mother and would often talk to him about her. A leading figure in the society of Chambéry was Marc Antoine Costa, Comte de Charlier, a cavalry-officer and duellist, whose wife sometimes gave a concert in her salon. Comte Costa shared with Madame de Warens a taste for the mysteries of alchemy. He had been in the service of the Elector of Bavaria, had assisted him in the search for the philosopher's stone and spent many hours "blowing," as it was called, in the Elector's Laboratory.[1] A few years later Isaac Rousseau was much disquieted by a rumour (which was unfounded) that his own son was engaged in this fascinating pursuit![2]

[1] Mugnier, 129.

[2] Letter to Madame de Warens, Nyon, 22 August, 1740. *Corresp. générale*, I, 133, No. 42.

Chapter XV.

RESTLESSNESS, 1735

IN 1735 Jean Jacques' restlessness returned. This old house of Madame de Warens's was not nearly as pleasant as the one at Annecy. It had no garden, and no verdure was to be seen from its windows. He was perplexed, moreover, by the task of managing her finances. The payment of her salary had been suspended the previous year owing to the expenses of the war, and though the arrears had now been made up,[1] other difficulties were arising. His protectress seemed ready to fall into the toils of every crank or adventurer who appeared, provided he had a plausible commercial or industrial scheme guaranteed to make the fortune of those who put money into it.

It was difficult to defend her against these scoundrels, it was vexatious and discouraging, and Jean Jacques was glad to get away from time to time for a few days in Nyon or Geneva, where his aunt, Madame Bernard, entertained him. Her son Abraham, Jean Jacques' old friend, had been killed in the Prussian service; and now came news of her husband's death in Carolina, where he had been employed in designing the city of Charleston. Going through his uncle's papers, Jean Jacques found two or three books that interested him and that he was allowed to take away. These included a criticism, by Micheli Ducret, of the apparently ridiculous plan of fortifications which the Petit Conseil had had executed in part, at Geneva, with a secret object of its own. Ducret had only printed the number of copies required to circulate among his colleagues on the Council

[1] Mugnier, 123–5.

of the Two-Hundred. Gabriel Bernard had been instructed to draw up a reply, and the manuscript of this reply Jean Jacques also took back with him to Chambéry. Here he was foolish enough to show Ducret's book to M. Coccelli, his old chief in the *Cadastre*; but he said nothing about the Bernard manuscript. Coccelli refused to return the book, which indeed might have been of some use to the Sardinian Government in the event of war; but nothing whatever came of the incident. In any case, as so many copies of the book had been printed, it could not be regarded as a strictly private document.[1]

Jean Jacques had fallen, this year, into a state of despondency and physical languor which he believed would soon develop into consumption.[2] Neither his health nor his character fitted him to carry out efficiently the duties which Claude Anet had performed. With the return of spring, the sense of his moral loneliness came upon him, and the need of some truer companionship than life had given. After all, Madame de Warens was not much more to him than a protectress; and the society of his friends in Chambéry was very unsatisfying to a heart as passionate as his. He had not forgotten Mademoiselle Serre, who, it is true, had been no more than a little girl when he had seen her in Lyons. He now thought of her more and more; and one warm night in June, without saying anything to Madame de Warens, he slipped away from Chambéry and hastened down to Lyons.[3]

Suzanne Serre, already a charming girl, little suspected the cause of Rousseau's visit, as he probably alleged business in the city; but she was flattered by his attentions and his conversation. He for his part began to dream impossible romances. After a few days, he tore himself away. Perhaps

[1] Rousseau seems greatly to exaggerate the importance of this episode in the *Confessions* (Book V).

[2] ". . . je ne sais s'il vaut la peine de vous dire que je suis tombé depuis le commencement de l'année dans une langueur extraordinaire; ma poitrine est affectée et il y a apparence que cela dégénérera bientôt en phtisie." (Letter to Isaac Rousseau, probably not dispatched. *Corresp. gén.*, I, 25.

[3] Suggestion of Dufour, *Pages inédites de J. J. Rousseau. Annales*, I (1906), 179–81. See Courtois, *Chronologie*, 24.

"From time to time . . . he went to see his father at Nyon" (Ch. V).

he might be in a position to marry her in a few years: clearly, he was not in that position at the moment.[1]

Madame de Warens, although she had heard from him on the day of his departure, had written in alarm to his father. Jean Jacques himself, returning penitent and ashamed, now understood the seriousness of his conduct. "My dear Father," he wrote,[2]

> Thank God, I am back here with Madame de Warens.[3] The shorter our misdemeanours, the more pardonable should they be. If this axiom be just, never was man more deserving of pardon than I. It is true that I am entirely indebted to Madame de Warens's kindness for my return to common-sense and reason; it is also her wisdom and generosity that have brought me back from this error, and I hope that . . . the increase of my gratitude and respectful attachment for this lady will prove solid guarantees of the wisdom of my conduct in the future. I beg you, my dear father, to count on it too, and although I realise that you have no reason to place any great reliance on the seriousness of my reflexions after my recent conduct, it is nevertheless right that you should know I had not come to this decision so giddily as not to take care to observe some of the decencies necessary on these occasions. I wrote to Madame de Warens the day of my departure so as to obviate any anxiety on her part; I wrote again a few days later, and was also in a mind to write to you; but my journey was a short one, and I prefer for my honour and my advantage that my letter should be dated from here rather than anywhere else.[4]

Jean Jacques had, indeed, realised how unreliable was his character and also how imperfect his culture and education. He ceased now to dally with music and began seriously to try and remedy these defects.

A new friend of his protectress, Comte François Joseph de

[1] It is necessary to explain the mysterious journey of June, 1735—the "égarement" for which he apologises in the letter of 26 June (No. 10 in *Corresp. gén.*). This supposition fits in with the love-affair referred to in *Confessions*, VII (1741) and in the fragments not utilised in the final draft of the *Confessions* (*Corresp. gén.* I, 45), as also with the letter (A Mlle. ***: *Corresp. gén.* No. 12): "Je me suis exposé au danger de vous revoir. . . ." I am inclined to place letters 12 and 13 of the *Correspondance générale* not in 1735, but in 1741.

[2] 26 June, 1735.

[3] He deleted this line.

[4] *Corresp. générale*, I, 27–28, No. 10. M. Dufour shows that No. 9 was probably never dispatched, as a reply to Madame de Warens's letter may have arrived from Isaac in the interval. See *Corresp. générale* I, 25, note.

Conzié, had recently left the army in Piedmont and come to live with his mother in the valley of *Les Charmettes*,[1] just outside Chambéry. This young nobleman took a liking for Jean Jacques. He possessed a library and, what is more, an understanding of literature, and he encouraged Rousseau in his growing taste for study. Madame de Warens herself was fond of reading. With all her advanced ideas on the relations between the sexes, she was both cultured and pious. She had retained, from the early period of her life, a liking for the books of Protestants and free-thinkers, and she and Rousseau spent many hours over Monsieur Bayle's famous *Dictionary*, a valuable book which her husband had sent her before he realised that he was to be deserted. They missed none of Monsieur de Voltaire's writings, or at least of those which appeared under his name. The *Philosophical Letters* or *Letters on the English*,[2] with their picture of English tolerance and their learned chapters on the Philosophy of Mr Locke and the discoveries of Mr Newton, deeply impressed Rousseau and did more than any other book to give him a taste for the things of the mind. He felt an ardent desire to emulate this great writer, to imitate the delightful colour of his style. . . .

Not for the first time, but more clearly than ever before, there came to him the vision of something better than the shiftless existence and the mediocre amours in which he was involved; the perception of what literary culture might be and of the consolations it could give; the ambition to learn how to write; the desire for greater knowledge, and the desire also to shape his life to ways of rectitude. His father had written urging the importance of adopting a definite profession, and the letter called for a reply.

[1] M. de Conzié bore the title of Comte des Charmettes.

[2] Rousseau in the *Confessions* (Book V) speaks first of the Correspondence between Voltaire and the Prince Royal of Prussia, which he says "faisait du bruit alors." A little further on, he adds: "Quelque temps après parurent ses *Lettres philosophiques*." The dates are slightly confused. The *Lettres philosophiques* had appeared in 1734; the correspondence between Voltaire and the future Frederick the Great only began in 1736, and their letters were not published in a collective edition until 1745, when Frederick had been King of Prussia for five years.

Jean Jacques sat down, and began his reply several times before he was satisfied. "I agree . . . No one is better persuaded than I of the necessity. . . . I am quite convinced of all you say regarding a career."[1] No, that wouldn't do: he began again:—

M: E: T: C: P. [Monsieur et très cher Père].

In the last letter which you had the kindness to write me on the 5th instant, you exhort me to tell you what I think about adopting a profession. . . . I beg you to excuse me if I have delayed in replying . . . I needed a few days to think about it . . .

I agree with you, my dearest father, on the necessity of making an early choice of a career and following it up in a practical way, I had already realised this. . . . Suppose, for example, that my natural bent had been for studying either for the Church or the Bar. It is clear that I should have needed financial assistance for my board, for my clothing, or again to pay my fees. . . . Let us see now what it would be better to do in my present situation. In the first place, I can practise music, which I know well enough for that purpose; secondly, a little talent I have for writing (I mean in style) might help me to find a place as secretary to some nobleman; finally, I might in a few years and with a little more experience become tutor to some young men of quality. . . . I confess frankly that that is the estate for which I feel some inclination . . . .

You must not think, my dear father, that I have devoted myself so entirely to music as to neglect all other sorts of work. The kindness of Madame de Warens in according me a refuge in her home has given me the opportunity to employ my time usefully, and I have taken a good deal of care to do so, up to the present. In the first place, I have drawn up a scheme of study which I have divided under two principal headings: the first comprises all that may serve to enlighten the mind and adorn it with useful and agreeable knowledge, and the other contains the means of guiding the heart to wisdom and virtue. Madame de Warens is good enough to provide me with books, and I have tried to make as much progress as possible and to divide up my time so that none of it may be useless.

Moreover, everyone can bear testimony to my conduct; I love good morals and I don't think anyone can reproach

[1] Each of these lines in the original is deleted. See *Corresp. gén.*, I, 29, note 2.

> me with any serious transgression against their purity; I possess religious beliefs, and I fear God; for the rest, subject to extreme frailties and with more faults than any other man in the world, I feel how many vices in me I have to correct. Still, young men would be lucky if they always fell into the hands of persons who hate vice and love virtue as much as I do. . . . As regards the sciences and belles-lettres, I believe I know as much as is needed for a young nobleman's instruction. Besides, it is not exactly a tutor's business to give lessons in them, but simply to see that they are profitably acquired. . . .
>
> I have no reply to the objection that may be brought against me regarding the irregularity of my past conduct; as it is not excusable, I don't pretend to excuse it. That, my dear father, is why I told you at the outset that it would only be after some years, and with more experience, that I should dare to undertake the supervision of anyone else's conduct: it is because I intend to correct my faults entirely and hope to succeed.

Rousseau dwells on his extreme indebtedness to Madame de Warens: several times she has rescued him from penury. "Her kindness in sheltering me in her house, in providing me with books, in paying masters for me, and above all, her excellent instruction and edifying example[?] have procured me a satisfactory education and the means of rectifying my morals which were then still unfixed." His gratitude is boundless, and he is going to ask her to agree to his passing the rest of his life with her.[1]

[1] *Corresp. générale*, I, 29–33, No. 11. This letter, written towards the end of 1735, is of great length, and I have only given extracts.

Chapter XVI.

VICISSITUDES, 1736–7

THE following summer Madame de Warens arranged for her protégé to spend a few months in the valley of *Les Charmettes*.[1] She even stayed there occasionally herself, though town-life was more to her taste. On the day they took up their residence she had hired a sedan-chair; but the hill out of Chambéry was steep, and Madame de Warens no longer as light as she had been: in fact, as M. de Conzié said: "Elle avait beaucoup et beaucoup d'embonpoint." Fearing to tire the porters, she got out and was walking up the hill with Rousseau, when she saw some blue flowers in the hedge. "Voilà de la pervenche encore en fleur!" she cried. Jean Jacques, who was very short-sighted, hardly noticed the flower; but many years later, when he was growing interested in botany, the sight of some periwinkle on a Swiss mountain brought back sad and poignant memories of his old friend.

The valley led back steeply between high ridges to the uplands south of Chambéry. At intervals, half-way up one slope, stood a few houses. A tiny stream flowed below, almost dry in summer, and overshadowed with fronds of acacia and hornbeam, of alder and mossy walnut; and here

[1] Critics have supposed, since Mugnier, that Rousseau's life at Les Charmettes only began in 1738, and that the early part of Book VI of the *Confessions*, which Rousseau himself refers to 1736, really applies to the period 1738–40 (see e.g. Faguet, *Vie de Rousseau*, ch. VI and VIII). It seems likely, however, that Rousseau's memory was not so much at fault as that. Masson (I, 93–94, note) supposes that Madame de Warens may have rented a house at Les Charmettes as early as 1736. This would enable us to attribute part of the Idyll to the year to which Rousseau attributes it in the *Confessions* (beginning of Book VI). M. Courtois also takes this view (*Chronologie*, 25). But the house which Madame de Warens rented on this occasion was not the famous house of M. Noëray, which she exchanged with M. Renaud only in 1738. It was in M. Noëray's house that Rousseau lived between 1738 and 1740, and it is to this house that the name of *Les Charmettes* especially belongs.

and there were chestnut-woods and vineyards, with pasture-land higher up. M. de Conzié's house and estate lay near the stream, where he had a swimming-pool and a little summer-house dedicated to the Muses.[1] In such surroundings of rural quiet, Jean Jacques was now to devote himself to literature and philosophy. For the moment, it seemed that his heart's desire was gratified. "This," he cried, as he embraced his kind benefactress with tears in his eyes, "this is the abode of happiness and innocence: if we do not find them here, they are nowhere to be sought!"[2]

During the summer and autumn, Madame de Warens came out from time to time to spend a few days in the house which she had rented. She and Rousseau used to have their coffee served under the portico and take breakfast together, after the Swiss and English fashion; and sometimes they would have supper in the arbour. But best of all were the picnics. On the 25th of August—the Festival of Saint Louis—they attended early Mass in the chapel adjoining the house and then set off on foot to explore the far side of the valley. Rain had fallen recently and the brooks were full. A light breeze played among the foliage. Up hillsides where the air was vibrant with the hum of grasshoppers, and black and yellow butterflies glided over the waving grass, down sunlit slopes, and through the chequered gloom of woods, their way led them on from hour to hour. Dinner they shared with a peasant and his family. Then, under the shade of a tall grove, while *Maman* gathered wild-flowers, Jean Jacques made a fire to boil the coffee. Everything they had done and said, and the joy and serenity of the day, reminded him suddenly of a sort of day-dream he had had years before in Annecy. This dream he now saw realised in the most striking detail.[3] On one other occasion of his life he had had a similar prevision.[4]

Thus Jean Jacques enjoyed a few months of perfect felicity. Unearned and unanticipated, it came down upon

[1] See C. Bouvier, *La Bibliothèque des Charmettes*, Chambéry, 1914.
[2] *Confessions*, end of Book V.
[3] See *Confessions*, III and VI.
[4] See above, p. 26.

him as a gift from Heaven; and it remained with him as long as Heaven willed it to remain. A spring of joy in his heart, it could not be assigned to any single object, it followed him in all places and in all occupations.[1]

The course of education which he had planned for himself was not forgotten. He went most days to see M. de Conzié, and spent many hours in the study or the summer-house. Five years earlier Jean Jacques had obtained a large copy-book and written on the first page: *Réflexions critiques et morales.* The book had not got further than this at the time; but he had since then written several essays: *Sur les femmes ; sur l'éloquence ; sur Dieu ; Essai sur les événements importants dont les femmes ont été la cause secrète*[2]—ambitious subjects which it must have taxed his ingenuity to keep within the space required! He also made exercise books for himself, stitching the leaves together. One he used for geometry, drawing circles and triangles with loving care and working out the theorem in the column opposite.[3] In another he copied extracts from the authors he was reading—passages which impressed him by their literary qualities and those which seemed likely to "guide the heart to virtue"; all in the beautiful hand which he had learned from Ducommun. The Count lent him volumes from his library, and Jean Jacques also subscribed to the *Mercure de France*, sending his first contribution to this periodical—a French song, set to music, which was published the following June.

On December 3rd he was able to write to his old friend, the Marquis de Bonac, and give an account of his doings since the adventure with the archimandrite. He told the Marquess how Madame de Warens had forgiven his past

[1] Rousseau in the famous Idyll (*Confessions*, VI) has unconsciously fused his memory of the emotional experiences of the summer and autumn of 1736, with the quieter but perhaps deeper happiness of the two years of study following his return from Montpellier, when he was more definitely established at Les Charmettes.

[2] See Dufour, *Pages inédites de J. J. Rousseau* in *Annales* I (1905), 202–8.

[3] In the museum containing the Rousseau archives at Geneva I was able to see this *cahier*, through the kindness of M. L. J. Courtois; and also the *Réflexions morales*, of which only a few pages were written. The former conveyed the most vivid idea of the pains and care which Rousseau gave to his education and of the studious life which he led at Les Charmettes.

misdeeds, and how, enjoying the shelter and tranquillity of her home, he was making every effort to become a gentleman and a Christian: "I have adopted a plan of study calculated to form my heart and cultivate my mind, and I pursue it as regularly as is permitted by delicate health and a physical langour which deprives me of the hope of a long life."[1]

Rousseau's health, in fact, was beginning seriously to trouble him. He describes how, one morning when he was setting up a small table, he became aware of a sudden and terrible change within himself. His arteries began to throb with extraordinary violence, especially the two big arteries in his temples; a deep, vibrant hum filled his ears, and behind this he could detect a musical note like that of running water, and a strange whistling sound. These symptoms persisted, being particularly acute when he bent down. They did not give him any pain, but they deprived him of sleep for many hours of the night. After a time, however, he began to get used to them.

Then something happened which really made him think his end was near. He had been much amused by a certain Jacobin of Chambéry who gave demonstrations in experimental Physics. Jean Jacques thought that he too would like to become a physicist, and essayed certain experiments of his own. But one day,[2] in the course of making some invisible ink, he noticed that the orpiment, quick-lime and water which he had mixed in a bottle, were beginning to ferment before he expected. He ran to uncork the bottle, but it exploded in his face,[3] and his eyes and mouth were filled with the burning liquid. It was then that there came to Jean Jacques, after the first onset of pain, the realisation that he was blind and utterly helpless. Bewildered with the agony, and with the darkness in which he was imprisoned, he sent for a lawyer and had his will drawn up[4]:

> In the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven and the twenty-seventh of June at Chambéry in the afternoon . . . Jean Jacques son of Isaac Rousseau native of

[1] *Corresp. générale*, I, 47, No. 14. First published in *Annales*, V (1909).
[2] 27 June, 1737.
[3] *Confessions*, V.
[4] Mugnier, 148.

> the city of Geneva . . . confined to his bed by an accident which has happened to-day but sane in his senses, memory and understanding as it has appeared to me, notary public, and witnesses . . . considering the certainty of death and the uncertainty of his hour . . . has made his will as follows. Firstly, he has provided himself with the sign of the cross upon his body calling on the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; has recommended his soul to God his creator, begging Him by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the most Holy Virgin and of Saint John and Saint James, his patrons, to have mercy upon him and receive his soul into His holy paradise, and protests his will to live and die in the holy faith of the Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church, and leaves his obsequies and funeral expenses to the discretion of his heiress hereinafter named . . . .

Jean Jacques, to be brief, left small sums to various monasteries to celebrate masses for his soul; bequeathed the legal share of his estate to his father; one hundred *livres* to the bookseller Barillot, of Geneva; and the residue to "Françoise Louise de la Tour, Comtesse de Vuarrens." Lawyer and witnesses testified that Rousseau was unable to sign, "having his eyes closed."[1]

Jean Jacques did not die after all. A fortnight later he was able to see again, and sign, in the presence of the same lawyer, M. Rivoire, a warrant of attorney made out to Jacques Barillot, with a view to receiving his share of Suzanne Bernard's estate.[2] He then went to Geneva to meet his father and complete the formalities required. He had feared that the Government might make his desertion of the national religion a pretext for depriving him of his heritage. No difficulty, however, was raised, although he was unable to obtain possession of the field at Sargy. Jean Jacques, being now of legal age (25), was declared heir-presumptive to his brother François, and he delivered to Isaac Georges de Pellissary a receipt for 6,500 florins, representing the half of his mother's dowry.[3] It would have

[1] The text of the will is reproduced by Mugnier (149–52) from the original in the public library of Chambéry.

[2] Mugnier, 152.

[3] Ibid., 153–4.

been a very different tale, had he been a Savoyard converted to Protestantism.[1] The laws of property in Geneva[2] were an example of the Republic's tolerance, and perhaps a shadow of regret crossed his mind that he had abandoned his native city.

On previous occasions he had been allowed to stay with Madame Bernard, but this visit being official, the laws obliged him as an apostate to sleep outside Genevese territory: a circumstance which was perhaps fortunate for him, as the city was at that moment in the throes of civil war. For some days he remained cooped up in his inn[3]; when finally he was able to visit the Barillots, he had the sorrow of seeing father and son, both armed, leaving the same house to join opposite parties in the struggle.[4]

On his return to Chambéry, Jean Jacques found a newcomer installed in Madame de Warens's house and, to all appearances, thoroughly at home there. This was Samuel Rodolphe Winzenried, a man of good family from the *Pays de Vaud*, and a convert to Catholicism. He was a big, fair-haired youth, noisy and active, and he gave every promise of becoming an excellent steward. With what remained of his mother's money, Jean Jacques paid a debt which he had contracted in Chambéry and handed the rest over to Madame de Warens.

So far from having improved during the change and holiday at Geneva, his health had now completely collapsed. The throbbing of his arteries had grown more intense; he was sick in mind and body. Madame de Warens did what she could to nurse him and cast about in her mind for some permanent cure. Perhaps before long she might take another house at Les Charmettes; always he seemed better in the country. For the moment, however, she decided to

[1] M. Mugnier quotes two cases that occurred about this time. The King of Sardinia prevented Canon Dupan's heirs, who had remained Protestants, from inheriting his property (p. 155).

[2] See E. Ritter, *La rentrée de J. J. Rousseau dans l'Eglise de Genève* in *Annales* XI (1916-17) 71-105.

[3] See the letter to Madame de Warens (July, 1737) in *Corresp. générale*, 49–50, No. 15.

[4] *Confessions*, V.

send him to consult Dr Fizes, the specialist at Montpellier, where was then the principal medical school in France. Jean Jacques had taken it into his head that he had developed a polypus of the heart.

* * *

He set out on horseback on September 11th, but finding that the horse fatigued him, he hired a post-chaise at Grenoble. Here he called on various friends of Madame de Warens and went to see Voltaire's new play, *Alzire*. Continuing on his way to the Rhone valley, he fell in with strange companions. His chaise had just drawn up in front of the little inn at Moirans, when five or six other chaises arrived in a procession : the whole thing reminded him of the adventure of the litters in Scarron's *Comical Romance*. Among the occupants of these chaises were Madame du Colombier, a newly-married lady; Madame de Larnage, a woman in the forties and amazingly vivacious; and the old Marquis de Taulignan, who appeared to be in attendance upon her. As they were travelling in the same direction as Rousseau, and lodging at the same inns, it was hardly possible not to fall into conversation. But they were fashionable French people, and Jean Jacques, dreading their raillery, if it were discovered that he was a recently-converted Genevese, introduced himself to them as Mr. Dudding, a Jacobite exile from England. The next day being Sunday, the ladies sent to his room to enquire after his health and invite him to take his chocolate with them; later he accompanied Madame de Larnage to Mass, and the party then set off for Valence.

Mr Dudding's serious countenance at Mass had led Madame de Larnage to suppose him pious and to conceive the lowest opinion of him; but on recovering from this impression, she lost no time in setting about his conquest. At first, he thought he was being made fun of: the bolder her advances, the more he feared being mocked and turned to ridicule if he took them seriously. Madame du Colombier, meanwhile, had taken leave of the party, and after dinner at Valence, Madame de Larnage and Rousseau went for a

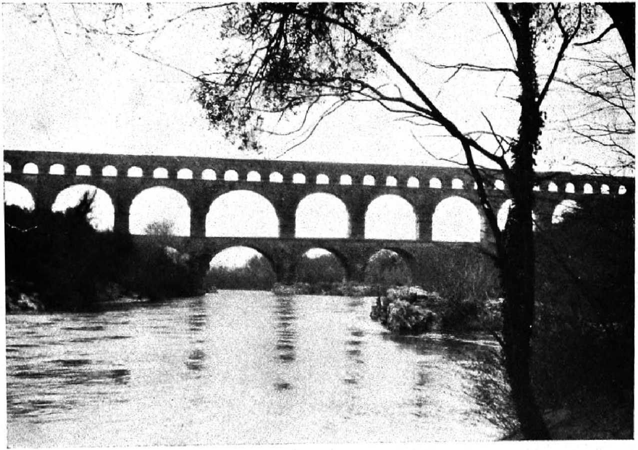
stroll round the town-moat together. The coquetries recommenced, and on this occasion he was not left in any doubt: for the second time in his life he surrendered to the species of happiness that was thrust upon him.

On their way down the Rhone valley on the Monday they said good-bye to the Marquess—much to Rousseau's relief, since the old gentleman had taken it into his head to talk about James II and his heir, and the Court of Saint-Germain. Rousseau, who had almost forgotten his illness, was soon travelling with Madame de Larnage in her chaise. Less than a week later, at Pont-Saint-Esprit, they had to separate, Madame de Larnage going to her home at Bourg-Saint-Andéol and Rousseau into Languedoc. It was agreed that he should stay only five or six weeks at Montpellier and then come to spend the winter at Bourg-Saint-Andéol. Madame de Larnage offered him some money before saying good-bye, but this he declined.

Jean Jacques slept that night at Remoulins and after an early breakfast of green figs, walked over to see the Pont du Gard. The Roman aqueduct, with its immense rose-coloured arches, mellowed by the rain and sunlight of centuries, far surpassed his expectation. He saw that what makes it so impressive is its isolation in the open country, where it merges harmoniously into the nature around it—like the Mausoleum and Triumphal Arch of Saint-Rémy. He felt like an ant as he walked over each of the three stages; his footsteps echoed under the covered waterway at the top, and he fancied he heard the deep voices of the Roman engineers. It is not surprising that he was less impressed by the Amphitheatre at Nîmes. This is, in fact, one of the most superb in existence, but the space around it and the arena within were at this time covered with houses and hovels, now cleared away.[1]

Dr Fizes, in Montpellier, did not take Rousseau's complaint very seriously. He clapped him on the shoulder, advised him to drink a good glass of wine now and then, and prescribed a simple diet. Rousseau lodged after the first week

[1] See E. Espérandieu in *Nîmes, la Rome française*, 1926, 20.



". . . j'allai voir le pont du Gard. . . . Le retentissement de mes pas sous ces immenses voûtes me faisait croire entendre la forte voix de ceux qui les avaient bâties . . . et je me disais en soupirant: Que ne suis-je né Romain!" (*Confessions*, VI).

or two with an Irish doctor named Fitzmorris, who kept a boarding-house for students of modest means. The medical students (there were several Irishmen among them) were good-natured and friendly, and Jean Jacques soon settled down into his new life. With some idea of becoming a doctor himself, he was beginning to receive lessons in physiology and to dissect bodies. But he had taken a dislike to Montpellier,[1] and his funds were running low. He wrote by every mail[2] to Madame de Warens, who for some time ignored his appeals. On October 23rd, however, he received a letter, in which she congratulated him on living in such a delightful spot and urged him to stay there until the end of June. Rousseau strenously protested:—

> You exhort me, Madame, to stay here until the Feast of Saint John: I would not do it even if I were to be covered with gold. I don't know that I have seen, in my whole life, a country more antipathetic to my taste than this, or a place more wearisome and disagreeable to live in than Montpellier. . . . As to my health, it is not surprising that it does not recover. In the first place, the food is no good at all, no good, I say no good, and I am not joking. The wine is too strong . . . the bread is tolerable, true; but there is neither beef nor butter; we only eat bad mutton and sea-fish in abundance, always prepared with stinking oil. . . . In the second place, the air does not suit me. . . . One cannot deny that the air of Montpellier is very pure and fairly mild in winter. But the proximity of the sea makes it feared by all who have weak chests; and so there are a good many consumptives here. A certain wind . . . from time to time brings thick cold fogs, bearing harsh salty particles that are very dangerous; and so I have colds and sore throats . . . more often than at Chambéry.

[1] It is surprising that he says nothing about the famous view from the terrace at Montpellier—with the purple foothills of the Cévennes to the N.E. and the Mediterranean in the South. Rousseau contributed more than most men to create in Europe a taste for Nature, and mountain-scenery in particular; and yet some of the landscapes we should most expect are entirely absent from his work. He must have seen Mont Blanc hundreds of times from Geneva and he does not once mention it; the beautiful Lac d'Annecy might never have existed so far as he is concerned; nor does he describe the Lac du Bourget, although it is quite near Chambéry. Finally, he managed to write a novel about Clarens and Vevey without describing the Dent du Midi!

[2] Letter to Madame de Warens, 23 Oct. 1737. *Corresp. générale*, I, 61.

The third objection is the high cost of living. Rousseau sends his respects to his confessor, Father Hémet, and to Father Couppier, another Jesuit of Chambéry. He *announces that towards the end of December he has decided* to take a cure of ass's milk at a pretty little place near Pont-Saint-Esprit, where he already has acquaintances [Madame de Larnage], and he asks what she thinks about it.[1]

Early in December he received news of a small remittance she was sending him. She apparently gave him to understand, in indirect language (their correspondence was perused by the authorities, who had probably discovered the relations between Rousseau and his protectress) that Winzenried was a treasure, and that he had replaced Jean Jacques not only as steward, but also in his mistress's affections; the young man, she added, had adopted the name of De Courtilles, from his native village.

Jean Jacques had difficulty in suppressing his agitation when he came to answer this missive. A sort of attachment had, in fact, grown up between his protectress and himself, which was not exactly love nor the relationship of mother and son, but contained something of both these feelings and was also made up of habit and memories shared in common. In the end his emotions were too much for him and he scribbled a desperate postscript:—

> You must have already received my reply regarding M. de Lautrec.[2] Oh my dear *Maman*! I prefer to be with D. [De Courtilles?][3] and employed in the roughest work on the land to possessing the greatest fortune in any other case. It is useless to think that I can live otherwise [than in your company]. I have told you so for long past, and I feel it more ardently than ever. Provided I have this advantage, in whatever state I may be, everything else is indifferent to me. When one thinks as I do, I believe it is not difficult to elude the important reasons which you don't want to tell me. In God's name, arrange things so that

[1] Montpellier, 23 Oct. 1737. *Corresp. générale*, I, 63–66, No. 19.

[2] Probably the offer of a post from the Comte de Lautrec, French mediator in the Genevese civil war, to whom Jean Jacques had been introduced during the winter of 1735–6.

[3] The editor of the *Correspondance générale* points out that Rousseau wrote D., and not Vs (vous) as formerly supposed.

I don't die of despair. I approve of everything, I submit to everything except that one article to which I feel incapable of consenting, even were I the prey of the most miserable fate. Ah, my dear *Maman*, are you no longer my dear *Maman*? Have I lived a few months too long?

You know there is a case in which I would accept the thing in all the joy of my heart. But only one case. You understand me.[1]

This mysterious postscript has never been explained; the letter which called it forth is lost. What was the article to which he could not assent? or the one condition that would make it acceptable? Perhaps Madame de Warens had told him that if he wanted to return to Chambéry, he must agree to sharing the same roof as Winzenried, and he was simply fighting to recover lost ground. However that may be, he ceased to think of Madame de Larnage. As soon as he could get away from Montpellier, in February 1738, he returned post-haste to Savoy, anxious to learn the true state of affairs for himself, and ready for the worst.

[1] 4 Dec., 1737. *Corresp. générale*, I, 72–73, No. 21.

Chapter XVII.

THE "STOREHOUSE OF IDEAS," 1738–9

MADAME DE WARENS received him coldly: Winzenried was there. With her habitual frankness, when they were alone she informed Rousseau that the young man was her lover. Jean Jacques burst into lamentations: "I shall die of it, but you will regret me," he concluded. Madame de Warens was incapable of taking these things so seriously; they seemed to her a matter of indifference, so long as one's heart was right. She told Rousseau that he was a child, that one did not die of such experiences, that she and he would be just as good friends as ever, that it only depended on him to share her favours with the newcomer.

Jean Jacques now understood what Claude Anet must have felt, five years before: it was a humiliating moment. He refused the compromise she had suggested, but tried to be agreeable to Winzenried and to treat him as his "brother."

As to Winzenried, his energy was surprising, his appetite for work infernal. Equally at home in Chambéry or on the widow Révil's farm at Les Charmettes which his mistress had rented the previous September,[1] he was never so happy as when sawing and chopping wood, loading and carting. You heard the man "everywhere at once." He made enough noise for ten or twelve men, and probably got through the work of several.[2] His relations with Rousseau were naturally somewhat strained, nor had Madame de Warens's temper been improved by Rousseau's refusal of her terms. She and her new steward were glad to relegate Jean Jacques at the first opportunity to the valley of Les Charmettes.

A little after midsummer she exchanged the farm for a

[1] Mugnier, 158.

[2] *Confessions*, VI.

larger house on the opposite side of the valley, belonging to Captain Noëray: the lease was signed on July 6th.[1] It was a commodious house, standing a little way up the hillside; with a dovecote and fountain, a vineyard behind, and in front a terraced flower-garden.[2] Below the long white wall of the terrace, a meadow sloped down to the main road. In the garden stood a row of beehives, and opposite the house but a little higher up the valley, was a chestnut-wood with mysterious recesses where the sunlight played. In this pleasant retreat among the lower Alps, Jean Jacques settled down contentedly for the summer and the two following winters,[3] and he was now able to resume the course of studies interrupted by his illness, and try to fit himself to become a private secretary or tutor.

Barillot had sent him several books the previous year, including Bayle's *Dictionary* (the free-thinker's *vade-mecum*), the works of Cicero, Newton's *Arithmetica*, and Father Lami's *Eléments de Mathématiques*.[4] Other volumes he found in M. de Conzié's[5] library; while the *Mercure* kept him in touch with the smaller productions of contemporary writers. With the novelists he was perfectly familiar. He had read Fénelon's *Télémaque*, Marivaux' *Vie de Marianne*,

[1] Mugnier, 173–4.

[2] There was also an orchard. See *Confessions*, end of Book V. This is the house specifically known as *Les Charmettes* to-day. It will be seen that Madame de Warens took it in 1738, and not, as Rousseau afterwards fancied, in 1736. *Les Charmettes* is now a museum.

[3] Courtois, *Chronologie*, 30–32.

[4] Letter to Barillot, 1737. *Corresp. générale*, I, 54, No. 16.

[5] M. de Conzié, whom he probably saw most days at this time, has left a description of him which, however, is of uncertain value as a document. It is contained in a letter written forty-seven or forty-eight years afterwards, and may, therefore, be coloured by a knowledge of what Rousseau subsequently became—a critic of the artificialities of an over-refined civilisation and an advocate of country-life and the domestic virtues. "Le goût très marqué qu'il [Jean-Jacques] avait pour la lecture porta Mme. de Warens à insister près de lui pour qu'il se vouât entièrement à l'étude de la médecine, ce à quoi il ne voulut jamais consentir. Le voyant tous les jours, il me parlait avec confiance, et je ne pouvais me méprendre sur ses véritables goûts. *Avec un amour très décidé de la solitude*, et, je puis le dire, un mépris inné des hommes, avec une propension marquée à blâmer leurs défauts et leurs faiblesses, il nourrissait au-dedans de lui une constante méfiance de leur probité." (Letter of M. de Conzié to M. de Mellarède, 1786. *Corresp. générale*, I, 340, No. 127.)

and been transported by those stories of true love and tragic misfortune, the *Doyen de Killerine* and the *Aventures de Monsieur Cleveland*, into which the abbé Prévost had put all the passionate sincerity of his nature. He had thus become acquainted with the Englishman of fiction, the Englishman as he figured in the minds of Continental novel-readers, the man of feeling, stoical and melancholy, a prey to the *spleen*. This, Prévost explains, "is a species of frantic madness (délire) more common among the English than among the other peoples of Europe. . . . It is the most dangerous and the most terrible of maladies!" There was little about the contemporary novel that Jean Jacques did not know.

But his intellectual education had hardly begun. What system could he adopt? He soon perceived that all the books of learning brought to his notice were not of equal value. The philosophers and scientists, in particular, contradicted one another with the greatest confidence. Some of their findings were positive, others purely speculative. He saw too that all the sciences are connected, and that one would do best to pursue each separately up to the point of junction with the others. He decided in the first instance to amass all the knowledge he could, and so make for himself "a storehouse of ideas"[1]—after which he could compare these ideas, sift them, and build up a philosophy of his own. Plainly, it was good to *know* a lot; but it was better to possess a few true notions than a medley of doubtful ones. If only he could learn something about his own nature, and how to lead a wise and happy life, he would have acquired more true knowledge than all the Academies could give him!

He would often take his books out into the orchard and lie reading under the trees. One day he had the idea of a little poem, which he would call *Le Verger de Madame la Baronne de Warens*,[2] and in which he would express his

[1] "Je me dis: Commençons par me faire un magasin d'idées, vraies ou fausses, mais nettes, en attendant que ma tête en soit assez fournie pour pouvoir les comparer et choisir." (*Confessions*, VI.)

[2] London, 1739. A facsimile of the first edition is reproduced in Vol. I of the *Correspondance générale* (pp. 351–66).

gratitude to his benefactress for all the opportunities of study she had given him, and summarise his reading and his reflexions.

> Verger cher à mon cœur, séjour de l'innocence,
> Honneur des plus beaux jours que le ciel me dispense,
> Solitude charmante, asile de la paix;
> Puissé-je, heureux verger, ne vous quitter jamais![1]

He had begun with the great seventeenth-century philosophers, Descartes and his disciple Malebranche, Leibnitz and Locke. The author of the *Discours de la Méthode* he saw through the eyes of Voltaire, as was natural. In the *Lettres philosophiques*, after a disparaging criticism of Descartes and Malebranche, Voltaire had observed: "All these reasoners having written the romance of the soul, a wise man came at last and wrote its history: Locke explained human reason to man, as an excellent anatomist explains the activities of the human body."[2] Voltaire maliciously eulogised Descartes for his imagination, and said Nature had almost made a poet of him.[3] These letters, in fact, evinced a misapprehension of Descartes' greatness, and a decided partiality for Locke; but this was an attitude shared by the whole eighteenth century, and Voltaire's humble disciple in Savoy was but naïvely repeating his master's ideas:—

> Tantôt avec Leibnitz, Malebranche, et Newton
> Je monte ma raison sur un sublime ton,
> J'examine les lois des corps et des pensées:
> Avec Locke je fais l'histoire des idées . . .
> Je tâtonne Descarte et ses égarements,
> Sublimes, il est vrai, mais frivoles romans.[4]

Jean Jacques read Voltaire with avidity and admiration. Many of the latter's shorter and less heterodox writings appeared in the *Mercure*, and here indeed Voltaire figured as an eminently respectable man of letters, hostile to irreligion

[1] *Le Verger de Madame de Warens*, p. 1.
[2] *Lettres philosophiques*, XIII (Sur Mr. Locke). Edition critique publiée par G. Lanson, Paris, 1915, I, 168.
[3] Ibid., XIV (sur Descartes et Newton). Edition quoted, II, 3.
[4] *Le Verger de Madame de Warens*, p. 7.

as well as to fanaticism.[1] What Jean Jacques liked in him was the poet and dramatist, rather than the sceptic:—

> . . . Et toi, touchant Voltaire,
> Ta lecture à mon cœur restera toujours chère;
> Mais mon goût se refuse à tout frivole écrit
> Dont l'auteur n'a pour but que d'amuser l'ésprit.[2]

This point of view was altogether characteristic of Jean Jacques, throughout his life; he was always to remain an admirer of Voltaire's "fine genius."

And yet even now he was not so completely his disciple as appeared; and unconsciously he was escaping much of Voltaire's influence. Even in the *Lettres philosophiques* there were passages which he might not altogether approve, though in his love for the author he did not pay much heed to them. Not knowing Shakespeare, he could hardly be aware that in "translating" Hamlet's famous monologue, Voltaire had skilfully transformed the Prince of Denmark into an anti-clerical philosopher[3]; but the bearing of such a passage as the following could hardly escape him: "Neither Montaigne, nor Locke, nor Bayle . . . nor Mr Collins nor Mr Toland [English Deists] have brought the torch of discord into their fatherland: for the most part, *that* has been the work of theologians who have first had the ambition of being the chiefs of a sect, and before long that of being the leaders of a party."[4] These observations might disquiet Jean Jacques' mind, the more so as he had no means of controverting them.

The two men, however, were already very different in other and more fundamental ways.

[1] See Masson, *La Religion de J. J. Rousseau*, I, 102–3.

[2] *Le Verger de Madame de Warens*, p. 9.

[3] "O mort! moment fatal! affreuse éternité,
Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté.
Eh, qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie,
De nos prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie. . .? etc."
Voltaire adds, at the end: "Ne croyez pas que j'aie rendu ici l'anglais mot pour mot; malheur aux faiseurs de traductions littérales, qui en traduisant chaque parole énervent le sens. . . ." (*Lettres philosophiques*, XVIII; *Sur la Tragédie*. Ed. quoted, II, 82–83.)

[4] Ibid., Lettre XIII. Ed. quoted, I, 175–6.

Rousseau, though no great believer in book-learning, was really influenced by his books. With Voltaire it was just the opposite. Voltaire loved books. He read scores of them, and assimilated them in the sense that he remembered a good deal of their contents and turned it to magnificent effect in his own writings. But at bottom these books exercised very little influence upon him compared with that of the society in which he lived.[1] Rousseau, on the other hand, went to books in order to learn how to live; he demanded serious lessons from them; and hence something of these books entered into the very fibre of his being. He had already acquired the habit of making extracts from what he called "les bons livres," a practice which he thought would help to correct his faults, and which he continued right on into middle-life, at a time when the *Lettre à D'Alembert* and the *Nouvelle Héloïse* had carried him to the very forefront of European letters.[2]

What were the "good books" which, during these two years of meditation, left a deeper impression on his mind and character than the writings of Bossuet and Pascal, of Montesquieu and Voltaire?[3]

In the objective history of any age, the significant books are not necessarily the great ones, but the books which are commonly read. The eighteenth century in particular will never be understood by those who imagine that the intellectual public was brought up, in the main, on the writers of that time whose fame has survived. With Montesquieu and Voltaire they were certainly familiar; but the very names of some of the books that were most popular and influential are scarcely remembered to-day; and some of those which deserved most attention were hardly read at all. The abbé Dubos's writings on History and Aesthetics were among the profoundest of the age: they were largely neglected. On the other hand, numerous readers had chuckled over Béat de Muralt's *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français, et sur les*

[1] See Masson, *op. cit.*, I, 91–92.
[2] Ibid., 92.
[3] For a detailed and brilliant treatment of this question, see Masson, Vol. I, Ch. IV.

voyages (a brilliant and original work), and everyone read the abbé Pluche's *Spectacle de la Nature,* which, though it had no great literary merit, was a veritable text-book for the use of schoolmasters and private tutors. Jean Jacques was already familiar with it; he had learned from it that Nature often teaches us better than books. More than one of these writers, in fact, cast doubts on the absolute value of book-learning—Claville and Saint-Aubin, for example, two moralists who would have been well-nigh forgotten now, had Jean Jacques not mentioned them in his little poem:—

> O vous tendre Racine! ô vous aimable Horace!
> Dans mes loisirs aussi vous trouvez votre place:
> *Claville, St. Aubin,* Plutarque, Mézerai. . . . .[1]

The Marquis de Saint-Aubin had published his *Traité de l'Opinion, ou Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de l'esprit humain,* in 1733. Le Maître de Claville's book had appeared in 1734 and was entitled *Traité du vrai mérite de l'homme, considéré dans tous les âges et dans toutes les conditions, avec des principes d'éducation propres à former les jeunes gens à la vertu.* It was just what Jean Jacques was looking for. Like the *Spectacle de la Nature,* the *Traité du vrai mérite* was one of several works devoted to the problem of education, at that time very much in the air.

Claville and Saint-Aubin were both old-fashioned writers, unimpressed by the scientific discoveries of the eighteenth century and satisfied with the guidance afforded by Christianity and traditional morals. Claville asserted that there was "no upright man without religion," and regarded Christianity, and especially the Christianity which one "felt" with the heart, as the surest guide. He was also a great believer in country-life. The seeker after wisdom was advised to withdraw into himself and look for happiness in meditation and solitude[2]—which is what Jean Jacques was doing. M. Claville indeed had nothing in common with Voltaire, but he was already very "Rousseauist." Saint-Aubin's book had a similar object and was likewise favourable to religion. But it was much more bulky than the

[1] *Le Verger,* p. 9.
[2] Masson, I, 89, 104–5.

convenient little duodecimo of Claville. It was a survey in six volumes of the sciences and the systems of philosophy; it revealed the gaps that existed in them and exposed their uncertainties and contradictions—in fact, its author humorously called it "les très humbles archives des égarements de l'esprit." He did not share the ecstasies of his fellow-countrymen in face of civilisation and the accumulation of knowledge, and he placed no great faith in intellectual culture.[1]

These writers appealed greatly to the recluse of Les Charmettes, who was beginning to have a glimpse of the notion that the moral conscience may be a guide in the search for truth, and that the claims of "sensibility" may even outweigh those of "reason."

> Le cœur plus que l'esprit a chez moi des besoins,[2]

he writes. There were limits to intellectual education. Knowledge and science, as Saint-Aubin pointed out, may even prove a pitfall to the man who does not possess the true knowledge of living.[3]

* * *

Jean Jacques had learned a good deal of Italian in Turin; a little English in Montpellier. He was now making the most determined efforts to master Latin. He pushed ahead with mathematics and geography, and even tackled astronomy. The scientific expeditions undertaken by La Condamine to the Tropics and by Maupertuis and other scientists to the Arctic, to measure the degrees of latitude, had fascinated him. He had written an article for the *Mercure* on the question: "Whether the world we inhabit is a sphere." His researches into astronomy sound impressive on paper:—

> Avec Kepler, Wallis, Barrow, Rainaud, Pascal,
> Je devance Archimède, et je suis l'Hôpital.[4]

He had procured a chart of the heavens, which he set up at night in the garden, face downward: it was illuminated by

[1] Masson, I, 90, 105. [2] *Le Verger*, p. 9.

[3] Cf. his saying: "Soyons bien persuadés que l'humble connaissance de nous-mêmes est préférable à toute la profondeur de la science humaine." Quoted by Masson, I, 90. [4] *Le Verger*, p. 7.

a candle placed in the bottom of a bucket which protected the flame from the wind. This apparatus was clearly visible from the road; and one night, when Jean Jacques was grotesquely attired in an old bonnet and padded jacket, alternately using his telescope and identifying the constellations on the chart, a number of peasants who were passing imagined that he was a sorcerer. As it was near midnight, they supposed this was the beginning of some infernal ceremony, and took to their heels in terror.[1] But as often as not, Jean Jacques soon ceased trying to identify the stars. His imagination was exalted by those millions of worlds sparkling far away in the blue, and it would soar out and lose itself in the immensity of space.

What happy days he spent at Les Charmettes! He was generally alone there. Sometimes, when he had to return into Chambéry, or if Madame de Warens and Winzenried came up to the valley, there were quarrels[2]; and Winzenried now being the favoured "child," Rousseau had to write afterwards and placate his benefactress:—

CHARMETTES, 18*th March*, 1739.

My dearest *Maman*,

I received the note which you wrote me last Sunday, and I came sincerely to the conclusion that as you thought I was wrong, I must in fact have been wrong; and so, without trying to split hairs on the point, I freely offered my apologies to my brother, and I offer the same very humbly to you. . . .

You sent me word that you were willing to pardon me on the occasion of your Easter Communion. I don't care to take the thing literally, and I am sure that when a heart like yours has loved anyone as much as I remember having been loved by you, it is impossible ever to reach such bitterness that only religious motives can bring about a reconciliation. I am receiving this as a little mortification which you impose on me, while pardoning me, and the bitterness of which will be, as you know, softened by a perfect knowledge of your true feelings. . . .

I don't think it necessary to assure you that I have for long been dying with impatience to see you again. Think,

[1] *Confessions*, VI.

[2] See Faguet, *Vie de Rousseau*, 90.

"Ici commence le court bonheur de ma vie; ici viennent les paisibles mais rapides moments qui m'ont donné le droit de dire que j'ai vécu" (*Confessions*, VI).

Madame de Warens's house and the valley of Les Charmettes.

my dearest *Maman*, that I have been deprived of this happiness for a month, and perhaps more. I am, my dearest *Maman*, from the bottom of my heart, and with the feelings of the tenderest son,

J. J. ROUSSEAU.[1]

These little differences hardly troubled the general serenity of his life. After a few months in the city, the return to *Les Charmettes* was like a release from prison; the advent of spring was like "reawakening in Paradise."[2] With what joy he noted that the sap was expanding the buds, and listened to the first songs of the nightingale! His bedroom looked across the glen, eastward. The bed was placed in a little alcove; and when he awoke in the morning the first thing to strike his eye, through the window framed with wistaria, was a quiet hill-top, brown and yellow with brushwood, and above it two hawks circling or playing. He has himself told us how he spent his days, in the passage beginning:—

> I used to get up every morning with the sun. I would climb by a neighbouring orchard, following a very pretty path which led above the vineyards along the hillside to Chambéry. There, while walking, I would make my prayer, which did not consist in vain babbling, but in a sincere uplifting of the heart to the author of the lovely nature whose beauty lay before me. I have never liked praying in a room; it seems to me that the walls and all those little works of men are interposed between God and me. I like to contemplate Him in His works, while my heart rises up to Him.[3]

Returning soon to the house, Jean Jacques breakfasted on coffee and roll, but in leisure, in the Swiss fashion. He thought: how much better it is here than in the city, where the days are taken up with paying and receiving visits, meeting distinguished people, and attending futile functions. Here a man gets to know himself, here he has time to think and to feel. Then Jean Jacques took up his books and went out to the orchard, and to see his friends, the pigeons. At first they had been very shy; but after a time, this quiet, friendly stranger, who spent many hours at the dovecote and who called and fed them during the day, had inspired

[1] *Corresp. générale*, I, 112–3, No. 33.
[2] *Confessions*, VI.
[3] Ibid.

them with confidence. And now as he walked across the courtyard, with his books under his arm, two or three of them winnowed down and settled on his shoulder. They accompanied him to the orchard, and while he lay reading, they perched contentedly in the boughs above his head.

After dinner Jean Jacques strolled among the flowers and visited the row of beehives at the end of the garden. The bees knew him so well that when he was transferring a swarm from one hive to another, they would settle all over his hands and face without stinging him.[1] And then in the drowsy hours of the afternoon he would read again, but this time for recreation, a book of geography or history. . . .

Happy days passed at Les Charmettes, in study and reflexion! Happy summer evenings, when the western sky was a glow of saffron and pearl-grey, and the pigeons came back to the dovecote, and all was peace in the world and serenity in his heart!

These seasons of fair weather would always be with him, in memory. Sometimes he thought of old Geneva, and his father, and the days before they were estranged. What good times they used to have, reading those novels or talking about Jean Jacques' mother! and what a queer, likeable man his father was! Sometimes he thought of the little parsonage at Bossey, of the coloured picture of the Popes, and of that night in the darkened church; or of the walk near Annecy when he had met Mademoiselle Galley and Mademoiselle de Graffenried, and helped them to gather cherries. And sometimes there would float into his memory a picture that never ceased to haunt it[2]: the vast, glimmering sheet of the Lake of Geneva, seen from Lausanne or Vevey, with the dark blue screen of mountains dreaming eternally in the south and east.

[1] *Confessions*, VI.

[2] Cf. *Confessions*, IV: "L'aspect du lac de Genève et de ses admirables côtes eut toujours à mes yeux un attrait particulier que je ne saurais expliquer, et qui ne tient pas seulement à la beauté du spectacle, mais à je ne sais quoi de plus intéressant. . . . Quand l'ardent désir de cette vie heureuse et douce qui me fuit et pour laquelle j'étais né, vient enflammer mon imagination, c'est toujours au pays de Vaud, près du lac, dans des campagnes charmantes, qu'elle se fixe. Il me faut absolument un verger au bord de ce lac, et non pas d'un autre. . . ." etc.

Chapter XVIII.

THE DREAMER OF "LES CHARMETTES," 1738–40

One always came back to religion. Always, at the end of each avenue, whether he opened Leibnitz or Saint-Aubin, or on a winter night gazed at the shining constellations, or walked alone on the hillside in the dew of a summer morning—always he was aware of a mystery. Life was great and wonderful, dark and mysterious. So was Death. Death and the Hereafter were near to Life, and though one might not always be thinking of them, never could a serious mind for long ignore their warning.

He would speak of it sometimes to Madame de Warens. That lady's beliefs had not undergone any real change since she lived in Vevey. She had retained, from the lessons of Magny and his friends, a deep inner piety, indifferent to the intellectual dogmas that separated the Catholic and Protestant worlds. She used to assure her confessor that she was a good Catholic; but she complained that the Scriptures were interpreted too literally, and Rousseau himself saw that her beliefs amounted to a negation of original sin, that they ruined Catholicism and even endangered the foundations of common Christianity. But if Father Couppier ventured to protest, she would at once retort: "I adopt the decisions of holy mother Church with the whole power of my soul. I am not mistress of my faith, but I am of my will. I subject it unreservedly and I will to believe everything. What more do you ask?"[1] And the good man had no reply to make.

Madame de Warens was so kind-hearted that she could not believe the wicked would be punished for ever. Queerly enough, says her protégé, while not believing in Hell, she was ready to accept Purgatory; for otherwise, she did not know what to do with the souls of the wicked; and, indeed, as Rousseau himself very wisely observes: "One must

[1] *Confessions*, VI.

admit that both in this world and the next, the wicked are always very embarrassing."[1]

Jean Jacques had been reading the theologians of Port-Royal, and his mind was almost subjugated by the imperious dogmatism of their system. It was not, however, a comforting one, in view of the probability of an early death. His health had been very poor, and it was possible he might die any time. Gradually the fear of Hell began to obsess him. "Suppose I were to die this moment (he would ask himself), should I be damned?" According to the Jansenists the worst was to be feared; though when he consulted his conscience, it reassured him. While strolling through the woods one day, and pondering on this subject, he discovered himself mechanically throwing stones at the tree trunks—and generally missing. So on the spur of the moment, he said to himself: "I am going to aim at that tree: if I hit, it is a sign of salvation. If I miss, then doubtless, the Jansenists are right."

His hand trembled as he raised the stone, but he hit the tree squarely in the middle; though he adds, with his usual good faith, that the tree was a very big one, and that he had taken the precaution of standing near to it.[2] The demonstration was not perfectly conclusive, but it was at least reassuring; and Jean Jacques was never again troubled by the fear of Hell.

It does not appear that, in this matter, he trusted to his Jesuit friends to set his mind at rest. Father Hémet, his confessor, a "good old man," and Father Couppier frequently visited Les Charmettes, and Jean Jacques also went to see them in Chambéry and to borrow books from their library. The genial, easy-going view of religion which the Jesuits took helped to mitigate in Rousseau's mind the terrors of Jansenism. He remembered their kindness and was never able to feel a sincere hatred for the Jesuits in person. But when he had to solve some fundamental problem of religion, he relied on his own reflexion and experience.

[1] Confessions, VI.. [2] Ibid.

And yet Jean Jacques still believed himself a devout son of the Catholic Church. He was *not a fanatical Catholic.* He did not hold the dogma of exclusive salvation.[1] He did not refuse to read those Protestant books which afforded a common meeting-ground for all Christians, such as Abbadie's *Vérité de la Religion chrétienne.*[2] This was a work on the philosophy of religion: it argued from the contradiction in man's nature, from his misery and his greatness, and his isolation in the world; and it showed how Christianity was designed in conformity with our needs.[3]

Reasoning of this sort would appeal to Rousseau more than the assertion of dogmas that eluded a rational explanation. To these he gave almost as little heed as did Madame de Warens. He believed firmly in the Supreme Being, and in the future life. He felt there was a Providence in the world. He was vaguely aware, perhaps, that misfortunes, like the rain, come down equally on the good and the evil; but he thought there must be some readjustment hereafter, for otherwise it would be monstrous that the wicked should triumph and the just man suffer oppression.[4]

He had accepted the Roman system unreservedly, and had never gone back, by thought or word, on the step taken at Turin. But his "conversion" had made no real difference to his innermost beliefs, to the ones that ultimately count. In the prayers composed at Les Charmettes, he uses expressions which he had heard in Geneva and which had twined themselves into his sensibility: "Father of mercies," for instance.[5] He did not know where his inner tendencies were

[1] He had written to his father in 1735: "Rien n'est plus éloigné de votre goût que la prude bigoterie, vous méprisez souverainement (et avec grande raison) ce tas de fanatiques et de pédants chez qui un faux zèle de religion étouffe tous sentiments d'honneur et d'équité. . . ." (*Corresp. générale*, I, 25, No. 9.)

[2] Jakob Abbadie (1654–1727) was a Swiss Theologian and a most eloquent preacher. He had studied in the Protestant Academies of France and been pastor in Berlin, before he came to England in 1688. He was made pastor of the French Chapel of the Savoy in London, and appointed Dean of Killaloe in Ireland by William III. His *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion chrétienne* (1684) was popular both among Catholics and Protestants.

[3] See Masson, I, 108–9.

[4] *Emile*, IV.

[5] "Père des miséricordes." See Masson, I, 127–9.

leading him. He would have been much surprised, had anyone told him that in ten years' time he would be collaborating with the free-thinkers and sceptics; that, in sixteen years, he would be a Protestant again. In the *Verger de Madame de Warens*, he ventures to hope that Geneva may return to the faith of her ancestors; little dreaming that it is he who will return one day to the faith of Geneva.

His books had influenced him, but not in the way anyone could have foreseen. Some, like Bayle and Voltaire, had prepared him to be a Rationalist—up to a certain point. Others had developed and fortified the Christian beliefs, the Christian sensibility, which he had brought from Geneva. They had made him at once a radical and a conservative. And when he returns to Protestantism, it will not be the orthodox Calvinism of his fathers, but a new liberal Protestantism responding to the needs of his conscience as well as his intellect.

When he prayed, his prayers were an effusion of the heart, a sincere expression of gratitude for his home and friends; a spontaneous outburst of joy before the miracle of the spring woodland, or when, on a warm evening in the Fall, he looked up from gathering the grape-harvest[1] to see a purple sunset smouldering on the far horizon. He composed two prayers in particular, one of them of great length, very similar in inspiration to the "Form of Ecclesiastical Prayers" used in Geneva.[2]

> God almighty, eternal Father, my heart rises in your presence to offer you the homage and adoration which it owes you; my soul, imbued with your immense majesty, your fearful power and your infinite greatness, humiliates itself before you. . . .[3] Oh sublime benefactor, your benefits are infinite as you: you are the King of nature, but you

[1] See Mugnier, 177. [2] Masson, I, 125–7.

[3] Jean Jacques uses the Catholic "Vous" instead of the Protestant "Tu"; but Masson has shown that the ideas are similar to those of the Genevese *Prière pour le service qui se fait le lundi soir*: "O Dieu, dont le nom est magnifique, et dont la gloire surpasse infiniment toutes nos pensées et toutes nos expressions, nous nous humilions profondément devant ta majesté suprême, et nous t'adorons comme l'auteur et comme le souverain maître de l'univers . . ." (Quoted in *La Religion de J. J. Rousseau*, I, 126, note.)

are the Father of men . . . my heart is stirred up, by the contemplation of all your favours and all your benefits, to offer you prayers of thanksgiving . . . accept them in the plenitude of your mercy. Oh my God, forgive all the sins I have committed up to this day, all the errors into which I have fallen; vouchsafe to have pity on my frailties, vouchsafe to destroy in me all the vices into which they have led me. My conscience tells me how guilty I am: I feel that all the pleasures which my passions had pictured to me in the abandonment of goodness, have become worse than illusion itself, and that they have changed into odious sources of bitterness; I feel that the only true pleasures are those which one tastes in the exercise of virtue. . . . I am penetrated with regret at having made so ill a use of a life and a liberty which you only granted me to give me the means of making myself worthy of eternal felicity.

And Jean Jacques determines to amend his life:—

Ashamed of my past faults, I make a firm resolve to amend them by a conduct full of rectitude and wisdom. . . . I will be indulgent to others and severe to myself, I will resist temptations, I will live in purity, I will be temperate, moderate in all things. . . . I will separate myself, as far as possible, from the love of the world and of the comforts and conveniences of life, to think only of you and of your infinite perfection.

It is not that these resolutions are foredoomed to failure; but one has to make them so often before they come to good effect! And the smallest conquest of good over evil is only achieved at the cost of agonies of effort. Jean Jacques appeals for grace:—

I implore your blessing on these resolutions, which I form with my whole heart and the firm design of executing them, knowing by sad experience that without the help of your grace, the firmest projects vanish away, but that you never refuse it to those who ask for it from the heart, with humility and fervour.[1]

The valley of Les Charmettes had one other lesson to teach its recluse—a lesson for which he had no need to search in books. Wisdom, in fact, is not to be found in

[1] These prayers of Rousseau's have been published by the late Théophile Dufour in *Pages inédites de J. J. Rousseau*, Ière Série (*Annales*, I, 1905, pp. 202–45).

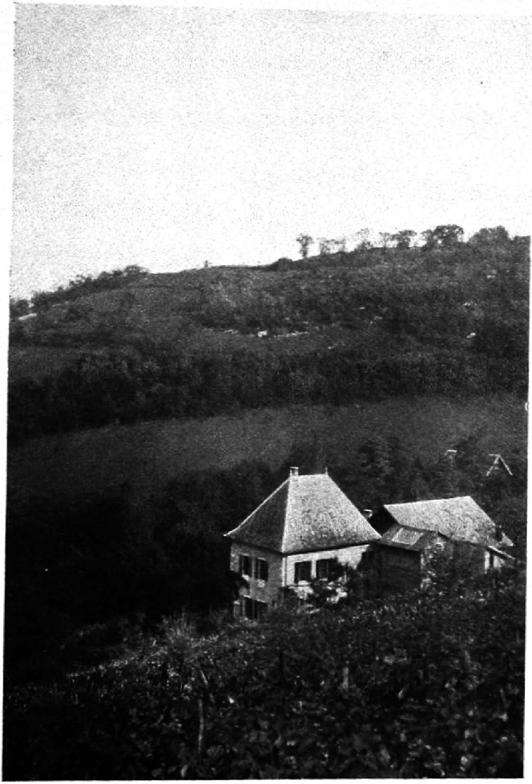
great learning; happiness is not to be sought in the round of social gaieties. Here, indeed, everything conspires to blind men to the real truth about life and about themselves. But when the seeker withdraws into some quiet retreat, when he enters into a passive mood, these superficial anxieties slip away. The hills tell him as much about God as the greatest theologian; the woods yield him the secret of a calm spirit; and his own heart, when he learns to listen to it in the silence of the passions that once troubled him, is the best philosopher of all.

This idea had hardly crystallised in Jean Jacques' mind. He had still to go out into the world and try to adjust himself to its exigencies and its ways, before the futility of the attempt could be apparent. Only then would he realise the true lesson of the valley of Les Charmettes and the happiness it had brought him, and begin to build up a philosophy which experience would have shown to be true.

* * *

In the meantime things were not going as well as could be desired in Madame de Warens's household. Winzenried was a difficult man to live with, on the rare occasions when it was necessary to live with him. If Jean Jacques offended him, it was *Maman* whom he scolded. One might be ready, after a quarrel, to take the initiative in making it up; but it was demoralising. Besides, Madame de Warens evinced a most unwarrantable tendency to see these things from Winzenried's point of view. Gradually, without anything definite being said, Jean Jacques felt an estrangement arising between his protectress and himself. She appeared pleased to see him and talk to him—when Winzenried was not there. But there was no longer the intimacy of old times, the immediate response of one heart to another.

Jean Jacques knew that he was no longer really needed at Les Charmettes. He felt isolated and alone. But he was fitted now to take up a profession; he was ready, after all, to put his knowledge and his intentions to the proof. Madame de Warens had acquaintances in Grenoble, M. and Madame d'Eybens, who were friends of M. de Mably, Grand



The valley of Les Charmettes and the house of Madame de Warens, from the road above the vineyard where Rousseau used to take his morning walk.

Provost of Lyons. When they proposed to arrange for him to become tutor to the Provost's children, Madame de Warens offered no objection, and her protégé accepted.

Thus armed with his "stock of ideas," but still burdened with the frailties which he had been so earnestly striving to cure, Jean Jacques Rousseau said good-bye to the valley of Les Charmettes and went out hopefully into the world.[1]

He had as yet no consciousness of genius. That strange wayward spirit, slumbering in the depths of his being, had not yet whispered to him of its presence. But the day would come, not many years hence, when he would listen to it with joy and fear, and when it would send him out, strong this time, on the path of greatness and misfortune.

[1] It was near the end of April, 1740, and he was twenty-seven years of age.

Appendix

NOTE I. THE EPISODE AT BOSSEY (p. 19)

THIS is not a rare form of sexual perversion, and is known as *masochism*. Krafft-Ebbing, the German psychiatrist, describes it as follows:—

> "A perversion of the psychic *vita sexualis*, which consists in the fact that the individual is, in his sexual feelings and thoughts, obsessed by the idea of being absolutely and unconditionally subjected to a person of the other sex, of being treated by that person in a haughty manner, to the extent even of enduring humiliations and tortures. This idea is accompanied by a sensation of pleasure."[1]

Krafft-Ebbing's analysis corresponds closely to Rousseau's description of his own case; and, in fact, he mentions Rousseau among several other examples of this aberration.[2] Of course, as Jean Jacques grew up the feeling must have lost its childish and ridiculous features and passed largely from the physical into the imaginative domain. "To go on my knees before an imperious mistress, to obey her orders, to have to ask her pardon, were for me (he writes) very sweet sources of enjoyment" (*Confessions*, I). The more his imagination worked, the more bashful he appeared, and thus Rousseau was nearly always one of the most timid and retiring of lovers.

It will long be a matter of dispute whether he was justified in revealing this and other aspects of his nature. Of his courage there can be no doubt; for it is, as he says, much harder to confess what is shameful and ludicrous than what is criminal. This, however, does not constitute a *reason* for confessing them.

NOTE II. THE ORIGINS OF ROUSSEAU'S MENTAL MALADY (p. 23)

IT does not appear that Rousseau suffered from any "complex," properly so-called, i.e. from the repression of a desire in the

[1] *Psychopathia sexualis*, quoted by Proal in *La Psychologie de J. J. Rousseau*, 305.

[2] See Gerhard Gran, *J. J. Rousseau* (English translation from the Norwegian), Edinburgh and London, 1912, pp. 60–61, for an excellent treatment of the whole question.

unconscious, or that the Freudian analysis is of much assistance to us in this matter (see, however, paragraph three in this note). What strikes one in Rousseau is that he was remarkably *conscious* of what was going on in his mind, and that his analyses are extremely penetrating (see e.g. *Confessions*, I). That is not to say, of course, that he knew everything about himself at the time it happened; but one feels that an explanation of his temperament as a whole must be sought in general psychiatry rather than in Freudism.

The symptoms of sexual aberration mentioned in Note I produced timidity and a sense of shame. When he wrote in 1770: "I doubt whether any man has passed his youth in more chastity than I,"—we can quite believe him, if we take the word in its roughest and most literal sense: he doubtless did not mean it in any other. For years, however, his attitude towards women was false and unhealthy. He was afraid of those who attracted him. With the arrival of middle life, of that second springtime of the heart which came to him in the woods of Montmorency (1756), and the triumphant appearance of his genius, he was on the way to complete regeneration: no one who reads the *Héloïse* and the *Emile* can doubt it. Before his death, he had certainly become a man of the highest character.

It would be idle to blame him for the perverse feelings of his childhood and youth. He was probably born with them. Krafft-Ebbing holds that the episode at Bossey simply provoked their first appearance. The shame and timidity they produced in a sensitive disposition extended to other domains of the mind besides that connected with love. They probably account for the extreme embarrassment which often tormented him, for the fact that in quite ordinary society and ordinary relationships he was often tongue-tied and apparently stupid. If ever they appeared in something like their old form, the better side of his nature, and possibly the social instinct, thrust them back. This produced despondency and accounts for those rapid alternations between exaltation and pessimism of which he tells in the *Persifleur*, a review which he and Diderot had founded: "Quand Boileau a dit de l'homme en général qu'il changeait du blanc au noir, il a croqué mon portrait en deux mots en qualité d'individu . . . un Protée, un caméléon . . . sont des êtres moins changeants que moi . . . . C'est cette irrégularité même qui fait le fond de ma constitution. . . . Je suis sujet à deux dispositions principales, qui changent assez constamment de huit jours en huit jours et que j'appelle mes âmes hebdomadaires: par l'une je me trouve sagement fou, par l'autre follement sage. . . ."[1]

[1] Quoted by Proal, pp. 263–4.

The whole passage is a most remarkable piece of self-analysis, and shows that in 1750 Rousseau was already subject to a neurosis.

This characteristic also drove him into solitude. And when circumstances led him to break with Diderot and the Encyclopedists, when persecution broke out against him in France and Switzerland, when even his own compatriots refused him shelter, and when Voltaire attacked him with all the ruthless cruelty of which that great man was capable—is there any wonder that his mind became partially unhinged and that he began to see persecutors everywhere? Whether the persecution mania represents a transformation of his early masochism, Rousseau's ideas of the world having been unconsciously coloured by his ideas of sex, presents an obscure problem; but it appears very unlikely. Rousseau's preceding state of unbalance, together with the actual fact of persecution, seems sufficient to explain the development of his mental malady.

What appears certain is that the disorder was hereditary. In David Rousseau it had taken the form of indifference to his grandchildren; in Isaac it went a step further. Jean Jacques had a cousin, Jean François Xavier Rousseau (1738–1808), himself a descendant of Jean Rousseau (1606–84). This cousin had been born in Persia and he bore a remarkable likeness to Jean Jacques. When crossing the Forest of Fontainebleau in a coach on one occasion, he believed himself about to be attacked by bandits and created a terrible scene, accusing the postilion of being in agreement with the robbers to murder him. His fears were groundless, and it would seem that he was subject either to hallucinations or to a form of persecution-mania akin to Rousseau's.[1]

This malady of his is not to be confused with insanity, or collapse of the mental and moral faculties. It was, on the contrary, an excessive development (hypertrophia) of abnormal tendencies already existing. Nervous malady gave place to mental malady. But this was only partial.[2] Rousseau's genius was not affected; it even developed in certain ways; and his moral character progressed.

Whether Rousseau's genius, *which he possessed to the end of his life*, depended in any way on his nervous and mental unbalance,

[1] See Proal, 319.

[2] Sainte-Beuve, in an article written in 1854, detected and characterised it with his usual penetration. Speaking of William Cowper's obsession, he wrote: "C'est . . . avec *le coin de manie et de folie* qui s'était logé avant dans l'esprit de Rousseau pendant les dernières années, qu'il y aurait lieu de comparer la maladie de Cowper, *si compatible avec d'admirables preuves de talent.*" (*Causeries du Lundi*, XI, 194).

is another question. No one has proved that genius is a malady: men like Molière, Scott, Browning and a score of others are arguments against this supposition. It is true that mental unbalance like Rousseau's is often accompanied by an excessive development of sensibility and imagination; and also that these are two of the most important elements in the constitution of genius. The most one can say, therefore, is that men of genius are, more frequently than others, subject to nervous or mental deviation, but not necessarily so.

If Rousseau, with all his inborn perversities and backslidings, is studied from this point of view, we shall be led to regard him, not with disgust, but with sympathy.

NOTE III. ROUSSEAU'S CONVERSION IN THE HOSPICE OF THE SPIRITO SANTO (p. 37)

SEVERAL enquirers have examined the Register of the Hospice, and a hasty reading of the entries led to the belief that Rousseau, having entered on 12th April, abjured on 21st *August*, and was baptised on 23rd *August*. The error was due to the abbreviation "Apte" or "Aple" for "Aprille." Masson has published a facsimile of the page which concerns Jean Jacques, and it is clear that "Aprile," and not "Agosto," is intended. The entry runs as follows:

Catechumini: Rosso Gio[vanni] Giacomo di Geneua Caluinista/Etta: 16/Arriuo: 12 Aprille/Partenza: no entry/ Setta: Caluinista/Abiura: 21 Aple/Battesmo: 23 Aple/Padrini: Sig. Guiseppe Andrea Ferrero—Sig. Frãnca Christina Rocca/ Richerche dello bacile e strene: L[ire] 5, 10 [soldi].[1]

It will be noticed: (1) that Rousseau abjured nine days after entering the hospice; and (2) that the column in which the dates of departure were usually recorded was left blank opposite his name.

The whole question has given rise to a long controversy, for which the reader is referred to the books and articles quoted. It must be confessed that the exact length of Rousseau's stay in the hospice is still wrapped in mystery.

NOTE IV. THE ANNECY PORTRAIT (p. 68)

The supposed portrait of Rosseau by an anonymous artist, in the possession of Monsieur le Commandant Favre, of Annecy, is

[1] See Masson, *Le séjour de J. J. Rousseau à l'hospice du Spirito Santo* in *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, XXI, p. 66.

attributed to the years 1729 or 1730. Tradition identifies the subject with Rousseau. It is reproduced as the frontispiece to Vol. I of the *Correspondance générale.*

The authenticity of the picture is uncertain. Both the eyes and the lines about the mouth produce a disquieting impression; but this may be a sign of the psychosis which began to develop about thirty-seven years later. If we compare it with the famous pastel by La Tour (1753), or with the portrait in serious vein, by Gardelle (1754), or with Ramsay's picture (1766), it cannot be denied that the general features, shape of the face, forehead, nose and chin correspond. The same may be said of Watelet's aquatint, although here Rousseau is in profile and wearing his Armenian bonnet. On the other hand, the Annecy artist sets the eyes wider apart than do La Tour and Gardelle, and makes the mouth shorter, without the genial lift at the corners which is represented in the later pictures. Ramsay's representation of the eyes, however, is not dissimilar from that of the Annecy artist. Watelet's etching being in profile, it is hard to judge of the eyes.

When the cap and collar in the Annecy portrait are masked, the face might be that of a man of thirty rather than a boy of seventeen; and Rousseau's life and character in 1729, whatever bad tendencies we know him to have possessed, would not lead us to suppose that he looked like that. One imagines, rather, an expansive animated face. The Rousseauist might well hesitate, *at first*, to identify these features, which have something baffling and mysterious in their sadness, with the open and smiling countenance of the philosopher as depicted by La Tour. If they represent the same man, his character must have changed very much for the better in the interval, and he must have been very much happier in 1753.

A further difficulty is raised by the question: who was sufficiently interested in Rousseau in 1729 to have his portrait painted by so able an artist? (The work is remarkable.) No one of whom we can think, except perhaps Madame de Warens. Jean Jacques himself could not have paid for it.

The problem is therefore extremely complicated. MM. Buffenoir and Vallette are inclined to regard the Annecy portrait as authentic: so, presumably, are the editors of the *Correspondance générale.* MM. A. François and G. Audigier are opposed to this view.[1] The present writer, after hesitation, concludes that the picture is probably of Jean Jacques. Is it possible that it was made in the summer of 1737, at Chambéry, between the recovery from the accident to his eyes and the departure for Montpellier,

[1] See Courtois, *Chronologie*, 13, note 1.

at the time when Rousseau was suffering from *malaise* and neurasthenia (see Chap. XVI)? This supposition would appear credible from a study of the portrait itself, but there is no other evidence in its favour and tradition does not support it.

NOTE V. JEAN JACQUES AND ANNE-MARIE MERCERET (p. 74)

WHEN writing the *Confessions* (1765–6) Rousseau regretted that he had let slip this opportunity of happiness. "Here again is a circumstance in which Providence offered me precisely what I needed, to pass a happy life. Mlle. Merceret had a real inclination for me. I could have married her without difficulty, and followed her father's trade. My taste for music would have made me like it. . . . I should have settled down in Fribourg, a little town which is not very pretty, but is inhabited by good folk. No doubt I should have lost great pleasures, but I should have lived in peace to my last hour; and I must know better than anyone else that there was no reason for hesitating on this bargain." (*Confessions*, IV.)

Rousseau was at the zenith of his fame when these reflections came to him; and that is partly why they have astonished one of his critics: "The fact that precisely, and despite his pride (writes M. Ducros) . . . he should have had the idea at this period of his life—and of his glory—to express so unexpected a regret, enlightens us better than anything I could say, and more than all he has told us himself, about the simplicity, I was going to say: the vulgarity, of his tastes. . . ."[1]

The word vulgarity seems a little severe. Rousseau believed that a life passed in "happy obscurity" and the tranquil accomplishment of one's daily duties is preferable to that of the great and famous. Gerhard Gran has said the last word on the question: "I do not see why this sigh from Rousseau's heart should surprise M. Ducros; it is quite similar to the one with which he closes the first book of the *Confessions*, the time he ran away from Geneva."[2]

One remembers what the abbé Gaime had already told him: that if everyone could see into his neighbour's heart, there would be more people wishing to go down in the world than to go up. In later life, Rousseau's own experience, since the publication of the *Émile* (1762) and the storm of persecution which it brought down, confirmed him in this belief. His admirers, it is true, cannot regret that instead of remaining in Geneva or Fribourg,

[1] L. Ducros, *J. J. Rousseau, de Genève à l'Ermitage*, p. 60.
[2] *J. J. Rousseau*, English translation, p. 118, note.

he chose—as it were in spite of himself—the way in which his destiny was guiding him; but it is perfectly natural that Rousseau himself should regret it.

NOTE VI. WAS ROUSSEAU A "CONSTITUTIONAL DROMOMANIAC"? (p. 88)

ROUSSEAU's wanderlust has led a modern pathologist to describe him as a "constitutional dromomaniac." M. Ritter more moderately compares him with a billiard-ball shooting this way and that: *Annecy—Fribourg—Lausanne—Neuchâtel—Fribourg* and Berne—Neuchâtel again—Paris—Lyons—Chambéry, etc. It is difficult to see in all these changes of occupation and journeys on foot more than the instability of a character not yet formed, and a love of the country and the open road. Such journeys on foot had been common in the Middle Ages and among the scholars of the Renaissance. In the eighteenth century Baron Holberg, the Norwegian, provided a notable example, which Oliver Goldsmith emulated in 1755. We do not suspect *them* of mental aberration. One should hesitate, in short, to read the abnormal into everything in Rousseau's character. In many respects he was perfectly normal, and *even more so than he would have admitted himself.* Some psychiatrists would detect symptoms of "alienation" in all of us! As M. André Maurois puts it, in the *Silences du Colonel Bramble*: "J'ai très peur des médecins aliénistes," dit le major Parker; "excités, déprimés ou apathiques, nous sommes tous fous, à les entendre" (p. 122).

NOTE VII. ROUSSEAU AND MADAME DE WARENS (p. 95)

IT has been remarked (Note II) that Rousseau's case does not lend itself to the Freudian analysis. He does not, for example, appear to have suffered from the Œdipus complex. The reader will at once think of his famous *maman*—Madame de Warens. But it is clear that he was never really in love with her. When she became his mistress, it was because she had established a moral ascendancy over his mind (if "moral" is the word), and he *submitted respectfully*, no doubt because of the tendency to Masochism (see Note I). But he declares himself that he regarded the affair as a sort of incest—in other words, his instinct was perfectly normal, not in the sense which the Freudians apply to the word normal, but in the sense which independent psychology applies to it.

One element in the Freudian psychology applies admirably to Rousseau; but it is precisely one of the less original ideas in Freud's system, and one to which other psychologists would find less difficulty in assenting.

The artist is the man who has been thwarted or disappointed in real life, and who compensates himself, first in the world of reverie and then in literature, music, painting, etc. And this *ideal* realisation affords the same satisfaction as the real or actual would have done.

If Rousseau effected a partial cure of this kind for his neurosis (period 1756–61), he was more than half conscious of it. And, in fact, whereas Freud lays so much stress on the part played by the "unconscious," what is evident in Rousseau's life is the rôle of the conscious. A disappointment of which the patient is perfectly aware may intensify neurosis, and this may be what Rousseau suffered from after his love-affair with Madame d'Houdetot—until he cured himself by exteriorising it in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

In its general lines, this explanation of art seems to hold good of many great writers—of Molière, Chateaubriand, possibly Shakespeare and Goethe. But does it hold good of Wordsworth, Scott, Tennyson—all great imaginative artists? One doubts it; and unless it can be proved of all great artists, it fails as a complete explanation.

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